



U.S. nuclear envoy Stephen Bosworth reacts during a meeting with his South Korean counterpart Wi Sung-lac in Seoul, South Korea, Monday, Nov. 22, 2010. Bosworth's trip to Asia for talks on North Korea comes as new satellite images show construction under way at North's Yongbyon.

Associated Press

Scientist: N. Korea has 'stunning' new nuclear facility

FOSTER KLUG

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea's claim of a new, highly sophisticated uranium enrichment facility could be a ploy to win concessions in nuclear talks or an attempt to bolster leader Kim Jong Il's apparent heir.

But whatever the reason for the revelation, which a seasoned American nuclear scientist called "stunning," it provides a new set of worries for the Obama administration, which is sending its special envoy on North Korea for talks with officials in South Korea, Japan and China this week.

Continued on Page A14

TO USE OR NOT TO USE?

That is the question.

Pope Benedict XVI holds the pastoral staff during a consistory inside St. Peter's Basilica, at the Vatican, Saturday, Nov. 20, 2010. The Pontiff formally created 24 new cardinals on Saturday amid cheers in St. Peter's Basilica, bringing a mostly Italian group into the elite club that will eventually elect his successor. Pope Benedict XVI says in a new book that condoms can be justified for male prostitutes seeking to stop the spread of HIV.

AP Photo/Pier Paolo Cito

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N. Calif. cities bring pot growing into the light



BERKELEY, Calif. — As numerous cities get set to levy voter-approved taxes on medical marijuana retailers, some municipalities in Northern California are already moving aggressively toward creating government-sanctioned marijuana farms to help supply them. Cities hope to rake in even more tax revenue from medical marijuana cultivation, which has remained in the shadows although it has been legal in the state since 1996.

On Monday, Oakland will begin the application process for four permits to run industrial-scale marijuana farms within city limits.

In Berkeley, a successful ballot measure to allow medical pot cultivation in industrial zones has would-be growers scrambling to score scarce real estate. Farther north, the Sonoma County wine country town of Sebastopol passed an ordinance Tuesday allowing for the creation of two large gardens for medical marijuana

dispensaries, and two more “collective” gardens where patients could grow their own. In Eureka, the Humboldt County seat, a committee is taking applications for four medical marijuana cultivation and processing permits to serve as-yet-unopened dispensaries in the city.

All this is taking place even though the state’s medical marijuana laws require any businesses in the medical marijuana trade to operate as nonprofits and even though the amount of marijuana the cities are authorizing growers to cultivate could net a typical drug trafficker decades in federal prison.

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration did not return messages seeking comment on how the agency might respond if the city-approved operations actually started growing pot. Oakland City Councilmember Rebecca Kaplan, who co-sponsored that city’s cultivation ordinance,

said the DEA had contacted her office but only to request copies of the regulations and background materials. She said the agency advised her that they were conducting research into the ways various cities were handling medical marijuana regulation.

“I think that’s a very hopeful sign,” Kaplan said. California voters earlier this month rejected a ballot proposition that would have legalized marijuana for recreational use, but the already thriving medical marijuana industry shows few signs of decline.

The state’s loose standards for medical marijuana use allow Californians to easily obtain a doctor’s recommendation for the drug. Yet the law provides little guidance for how patients or their caregivers can legally cultivate the drug, which has forced growers underground. Oakland officials hoped to bring pot growing into the light and curtail the environmental damage, fire danger and crime

associated with covert grow houses.

The City Council over the summer authorized four permits for large-scale growing. The permits would not set limits on the amount of pot that could be grown, but growers would have to implement environmental protections, security, labor standards, transparent finances and inventory tracking. Permit holders would have to pay an annual \$211,000 fee as well as a special higher tax rate levied on marijuana businesses by the city.

About 300 individuals and groups have expressed interest in obtaining cultivation or dispensary permits, city records show.

First on that list is Debby Goldsberry, a longtime fixture on the Northern California medical marijuana scene and a founder of Berkeley Patients Group, a pot dispensary in operation for more than 10 years. □




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Believers find mixed blessings in Pope's comments

By JEANNIE NUSS,

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Some Catholic believers in the Americas greeted Pope Benedict XVI's recent comments on condoms as a sign that the church was stepping into the modern debate in the fight against AIDS, though the church was adamant Sunday that nothing has changed in its views banning contraception. There was praise and wariness for the pope's comments that condoms could be morally justified in some limited situations, such as for male prostitutes wanting to prevent the spread of HIV. Others cautioned that it could open a doctrinal Pandora's box. And the exact meaning of what the pope said was still up for interpretation.

"That's a theological mind trap," said Wendy Lasekan, a 47-year-old stay-at-home mom, after Sunday morning Mass at Saint Michael Catholic Church in Worthington, Ohio, a suburb of Columbus.

"In some cases, it would be justifiable — or acceptable — to use a condom," she said. "If your goal would be to prevent the spread of AIDS, that would be a charitable act." Ellen Reik, a 79-year-old retired housewife who attended Saint Michael, said if taken out of context, the pope's remarks could renew the debate over the morality of birth control — both as a contraceptive and a means to curb the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.

Several more believers who spoke to The Associated Press following Sunday services in the United States and South America felt the pope's comments marked a tentative step into a more modern stance in the global fight against AIDS.

Jean Jasman, an 81-year-old state worker from Montpelier, Vt., called the stance a departure from church doctrine on condom use, "but it's to the betterment of humanity, if we can help prevent the spread of this horrendous disease."

Lois Breaux rolled her eyes when asked about the Pope's statements as she was leaving Mass at St. Kieran Church in the Coconut Grove neighborhood of Miami.

"About time — and it wasn't enough," she said.

"As a Catholic, they need to recognize this is an epidemic. The church needs to stand up and say what he did, but he should have gone further."

Vatican officials strongly emphasized Sunday that the church's position on contraception has not changed. The pope spoke in an interview given to a German journalist. Vatican newspaper L'Osservatore Romano on Saturday published excerpts from the book, "Light of the World," three days ahead of publication. In the interview, Benedict says that in certain cases, such as for a male prostitute, condom use could be a first step in assuming moral responsibility for stemming the spread of the virus that causes AIDS.

The Holy See's chief spokesman, the Rev. Federico Lombardi, stressed that Benedict was not "morally justifying" the unbridled exercise of sexuality and the church's main advice in the fight against AIDS remains the same: promoting sexual abstinence and fidelity among married couples.

The pope's comments caught some followers off-guard with the frank discussion of a taboo topic. "I was shocked. I thought, 'Why even mention that?' It was unnecessary," said Joan Caron, 86, of Oldtown, Maine, who attended Mass at the Basilica of the Assumption in Baltimore, the nation's oldest Roman Catholic cathedral. "I was just shocked that he'd even bring the word up." In Brazil, home to more Roman Catholics than any other country, 71-year-old Idalina Fernandes said she thought it was strange when she first heard the news.

"The pope and the Church had been criticized for being too strict regarding this subject, but I guess we can't close our eyes to the problems we have today in the world," said Fernandes, who helps organize masses at a small church in Sao Paulo. "I never thought the pope would say something like that, but the world is different today, the Church seems to know that."

The fine distinctions in the pope's comments were clear to Cliff Krieger, 68, of Lowell, Mass., who said it was good that the discussion on preventing disease was taking



Visitors to New York's Fifth Avenue walk past St. Patrick's Cathedral, Saturday, Nov. 20, 2010. Pope Benedict XVI says in a new book that condoms can be justified for male prostitutes seeking to stop the spread of HIV, a stunning comment for a church criticized for its opposition to condoms and for a pontiff who has blamed them for making the AIDS crisis worse.

(AP Photo/Mary Altaffer)

place, though he generally approves of the church's position on contraception.

"I think that the church is saying that use of condoms is missing the point about what sex is about," he said. "There are a lot of people who are ... just using it for pleasure for themselves, as they might be using cocaine on the weekend. So I think the church's stand is generally a pretty good one." Speaking shortly before Mass began Sunday morning at St. Mary of the Lake Roman Catholic Church in Lakewood, N.J., 42-year-old Jason Randall said he strongly supports the church's position that forbids the use of condoms and other contraceptives. But he felt the pope's comments, which stated that condoms could be used in some limited cases, shows that sometimes exceptions are needed for almost every rule. "I know it's a cliché to put it this way, but if it helps prevent even one death or one person getting sick, it's worth it," Randall said. "I believe in a loving God, one who does not want people to suffer, whether they be saints or sinners."

"I think that the church needs to realize that sometimes you have to make adjustments with the times and that saving people's lives and protecting life is ultimately the most important thing," said Josephine Zohny of Brooklyn, N.Y., after leaving Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York. □

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Facebook-banning NJ pastor acknowledges threesome



NEPTUNE TOWNSHIP, N.J. – A pastor who said Facebook was a “portal to infidelity” and told married church leaders to delete their accounts or resign once testified that he had a three-way sexual relationship with his wife and a male church assistant.

The Rev. Cedric Miller confirmed the information reported Saturday by the Asbury Park Press of Neptune, which cited testimony he gave in a criminal case in 2003. The relationship had ended by that time.

Miller gained national attention when he issued the Facebook edict this week. He said it came about because

much of the marital counseling he has performed over the past year and a half has concerned infidelity stemming from the social-networking website. The 48-year-old leader of Living Word Christian Fellowship Church in Neptune Township had claimed Facebook ignites old passions, and he ordered about 50 married church officials to delete their accounts with the social networking site or resign from their leadership positions.

Miller had previously asked married congregants to share their login information with their spouses as he does and now plans to suggest that they

give up Facebook altogether. The minister also said he would leave the site this week. In court testimony he gave in April 2003, Miller said his wife had an extramarital affair with the church assistant. Miller said he participated in many of the sexual encounters and said the assistant’s wife was sometimes present, too. Miller said the dalliances which occurred in the Millers’ home sometimes took place during Thursday Bible study meetings and Sundays after church. But the minister said the encounters “came to a crashing halt” when several women in the church accused the assistant of having sex

with them.

The testimony was given in connection with a criminal case against the assistant that was eventually dismissed. The names of the church assistant and his wife were not disclosed, and Miller told the newspaper that he was concerned that revisiting the incident would “irreparably” hurt some people.

“It has come to my attention that a very painful part of my past has resurfaced,” Miller wrote in an e-mail sent Friday. Noting that his court testimony was mailed to his church leaders and other pastors several years ago, Miller said, “This was resolved at that

time and accordingly we will not allow it to detract from our mission at hand to save as many marriages as we can.” Miller said people must look at his Facebook directives in the proper context.

“My life as a minister, husband, father and friend has led me to the conviction that I must do all that I can to help as many people strengthen, preserve and repair the often times fragile cords of marriage,” Miller wrote.

A message left by The Associated Press for the church’s pastor was not immediately returned Saturday. □

Autopsies being done on mom, 3 kids slain in Fla.

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Autopsies were being performed Sunday on the bodies of a young mother and three small children found slain in what was described by police as a violent crime scene in north Florida.

The street has reopened in front of the modest, single-story home, which was otherwise quiet on Sunday morning except for a single police officer standing guard.

Tallahassee police spokesman David McCranie said the autopsies are being done in the morning, and authorities working to find out who may have wanted to harm the family hope to have more information by the afternoon.

The home sits in a new subdivision a few miles from the state Capitol.

Detectives described the crime scene inside the home just a few miles from the state Capitol as violent, but police have not elaborated on how the family was killed.

Neighbors and relatives have identified the

victims as a single, stay-at-home mother and her twin 6-year-old girls and 3-year-old son, but police have not released their names.

The neighborhood had burglaries in recent years, though the crimes had waned with increased police patrols. Authorities hadn’t been called to the home before Saturday, McCranie said.

The home is in a subdivision built about five years ago, surrounded by dense woods a few miles from the campuses of Florida State University and Florida A&M University. The neighborhood is made up of a lot of families, McCranie said.

“This is a very shocking and unusual case for us,” he said.

The bodies were found after police received a suspicious call at 10:15 a.m. Saturday. By the afternoon, a crowd had gathered outside the house while crime scene investigators came and went. □

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Corruption charges disturb residents in Md. County

BOWIE, Md. – In two years, Prince George's County residents have seen a former schools superintendent sent to prison and corruption charges brought against a senior state senator and the county executive and his wife.

The latest case is the stuff of movies or late-night TV jokes: Authorities say County Executive Jack Johnson and his wife were arrested Nov. 12 after he accepted \$15,000 from a developer and federal investigators tapping his phone reportedly heard him tell her to flush a \$100,000 check down the toilet and hide \$79,600 in her bra.

The string of scandals has left residents angry, frustrated and wondering who will be next. Maryland U.S. Attorney Rod Rosenstein described their arrests as "the tip of the iceberg."

"A lot of the problems with the county have been the 'pay-for-play' thing that a lot of reputable stores just don't want to deal with it," said longtime county resident Linda Baker, 64, as she shopped at a strip mall this week. "Both my husband and I are retired, and we just don't want to be here anymore."

But Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller, whose district includes much of the county, said the federal investigation could lead to a new beginning, as long-festering problems come to the surface.

"I don't see it affecting the county adversely in the sense that I think there's going to be more indictments and I think there will be a sigh of relief that this has come to a head and that the proper authorities are dealing with it

and that the county can now move forward," said Miller, a political lion who has been the state Senate president since 1987.

Prince George's, a suburb of Washington, D.C., is the nation's wealthiest majority-black county, according to the census. The county, which has about 834,000 residents, is 66 percent black with a median annual household income of \$71,696.

While residents have at times complained that Prince George's lacks the shopping and entertainment offerings of its neighbors, it has scored some notable successes from luring the Washington Redskins to a new Landover stadium in the late 1990s to attracting the glitzy National Harbor development to the Potomac River's shores a few years ago.

Still, the county has been dogged by controversies involving its police department which had a high rate of officer-involved fatal shootings in the 1990s and its government leaders.

Audrey Scott, a former County Council member who chairs the Maryland Republican Party, said she used to hear about officials expecting developers to go beyond what was required to, say, build a playground or refurbish a senior citizens center.

"There were certain elected officials who felt that developers owed something more above and beyond what was required in the zoning application process, in the permitting process," said Scott, who ran unsuccessfully for county executive against Johnson in 2002.

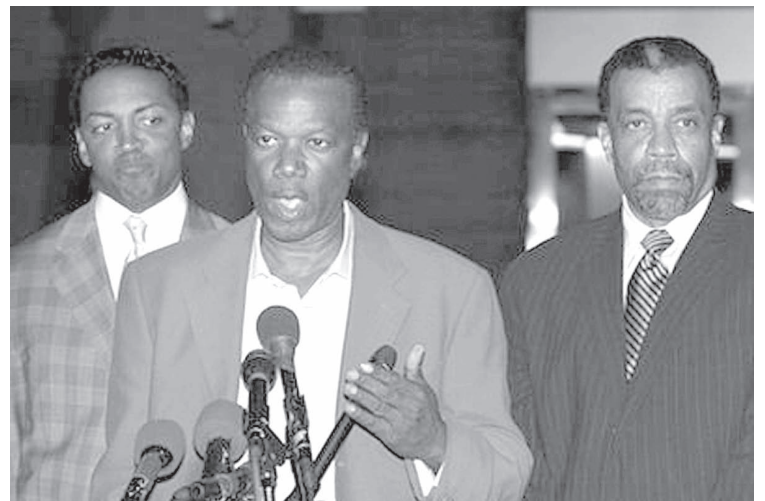
The FBI affidavit in the Johnson case describes a bizarre series of events in which Johnson placed a call to his wife, Leslie, after he was confronted by FBI agents about the \$15,000 payment. With FBI agents at the door of the couple's Mitchellville home and investigators listening in on their phone conversation, the affidavit says, Johnson told his wife (a county council member-elect) to flush a \$100,000 check from a real estate developer down the toilet and to hide nearly \$80,000 in cash.

"Put it in your bra and walk out or something," Johnson reportedly told his wife. She did as advised, according to the FBI, and agents recovered the money from her underwear.

Jack and Leslie Johnson were charged with witness and evidence tampering and destruction, alteration and falsification of records in a federal investigation. They both face 20 years in prison.

He says he is innocent of the charges. Leslie Johnson's attorney said she is asking for prayers and support "through the ordeal of fighting to disprove the allegations that are pending against her now." Authorities said the investigation was initiated in January 2006 after FBI agents learned about allegations of real estate developers offering rewards to county officials in exchange for personal and business favors.

The investigation expanded this past week when nine more people were indicted, including three county police officers. Two officers were charged with conspiring to commit extortion in a scheme



to sell untaxed cigarettes and alcohol. While those indictments don't mention Johnson, federal prosecutors have said they are related and that they are determined to root out corruption in the county.

Some residents can only shake their heads when asked about the scandal, walking away and muttering words like "depressing" without saying anything more.

Johnson, a Democrat, now comes to work as the county's chief executive near the end of his second term with an electronic monitoring device. His term ends Dec. 6, when he will be succeeded by a Democrat who had twice run against him unsuccessfully.

In a hastily called news conference meant to reassure county residents, Rushern

Baker said he would remain focused on the kitchen-table issues that people care about job growth, transit-oriented development, health care and school reform. He also called for an ethics reform package, including the first county inspector general, a ban on county credit cards for elected officials and tighter campaign finance regulations.

Marva Henry, who lived in Prince George's County for 29 years and only recently moved away, said she questions why prosecutors seem to focus on African-American officials. Her husband, Winston, also expressed frustration that prosecutors seem to be focusing more on Prince George's County than other localities. But both said they were angry at Johnson over the allegations. □

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Coroner: 2 Ohio women, boy stabbed and dismembered



MOUNT VERNON, Ohio – Blood covered so much of an Ohio home where two women and an 11-year-old boy were stabbed to death that several rooms have to be gutted, a

family friend said.

Tina Herrmann, her son, Kody Maynard, and her friend Stephanie Sprang were stabbed multiple times, and their dismembered remains were put in garbage bags and lowered into a hollow tree, Knox County Coroner Jennifer Ogle said Saturday. Authorities found the bodies Thursday, along with the remains of the family dog, a miniature pinscher named Tanner, said Joe Pejsa, a family friend.

Pejsa, the uncle of Herrmann's former live-in boyfriend, Greg Borders, said he was the first person allowed

inside Herrmann's home after investigators cleared the scene. He cleaned blood off the bathroom walls with bleach so his nephew wouldn't have to see it.

"It was terrible," he said. "Everything led back to the bathroom."

The victims disappeared Nov. 10 along with Herrmann's daughter, 13-year-old Sarah Maynard, who was found bound and gagged days later in the basement of an unemployed tree-cutter, Matthew Hoffman. Hoffman is accused of kidnapping the girl and keeping her in the basement of his home in Mount Vernon, about 10 miles west of Howard in central Ohio.

Authorities say Hoffman provided information that led investigators to the bodies in a wildlife preserve. He is the only suspect in the killings. His attorney has declined to comment.

The disappearances and subsequent discovery of the

bodies have unfolded like a horror movie in Mount Vernon, where people banded together to form search parties in hopes of finding the victims. Pejsa answered the door Saturday at Herrmann's home, where he was moving out furniture with Borders, who did not want to be interviewed. A memorial of flowers and balloons was growing on the front lawn near a tree that Pejsa says Kody used as second base when he played kickball.

The bodies were found at the base of the tree in Fredericktown, and authorities had to cut away part of the trunk to get them out, Pejsa said investigators told him.

Preliminary autopsy reports show that the three were stabbed multiple times with a knife in the back and chest Nov. 10.

"They were then placed inside large plastic garbage bags and later lowered into the hollow of a large tree," Ogle said in a statement.

It's not clear why the four were targeted, and authorities have not speculated on a motive. But the sheriff has suggested that Hoffman, who spent six years in a Colorado prison for arson and other charges, had been watching them for some time.

In the months before they died, Pejsa said, Borders and Herrmann suspected somebody was watching them. Several months ago, they saw a man dressed in camouflage sitting on a tree stump across the street, staring at their home. He said Borders couldn't say for sure if the man on the stump was Hoffman, but he believes it was him.

"There would be knocks at the door and people would take off," he said.

Pejsa said the family has been moving some of the furniture out of the home and has hired a company to gut some of the rooms.

"Greg has no intention of coming back to this place," he said. □



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The Marriott Stellaris International Beach Tennis Event concludes this weekend at Moomba Beach



Page A10

Brazil wins the Nations Cup in a sizzling third-set tie-break

Page A8



Great winners of the Madame Janette Youth Beach Tennis Tournament



HADICURARI - Forty kids braved the weather to play in the Madame Janette Youth Beach Tennis Tournament, which was held on the Sunday morning of the Marriott Stellaris Beach Tennis Event at MooMba Beach this past weekend. They played their hearts out on the courts; a few drops of rain and an overcast sky could not deter them in any way.

Continued on Page A9

Italian journalist loses laptop and offers reward

HADICURARI - An Italian journalist, on the island to cover the Marriott Stellaris International Beach Tennis Event at MooMba Beach, has lost his laptop when exiting the airport on arrival. He just left his laptop in its black case on the upper part of his luggage cart and only realized his mistake half an hour later. By that time the laptop was gone. The journalist, Marco, is in dire straights: not only is all the information gone, but there were also personal documents in the case. So he is offering a reward of \$ 200.-- to get his laptop, which is password protected, back. If found, please call organizer of the Beach Tennis Event, Sjoerd de Vries at 5936512. □

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In an outstanding beach tennis match at MooMba Beach

Brazil wins the Nations Cup in a sizzling third-set tie-break



HADICURARI - Beach tennis at the highest level was showcased to perfection last Friday evening, when the Nations Cup of the Marriott Stellaris Beach Tennis Event went underway at MooMba Beach. The best teams per country battled each other for all that they were worth, but no one could defeat the teams from Brazil: they were just too good.

Aruba did not have a chance, nor did the Czech Republic, Holland or the USA. No, it was only Brazil that counted: its two pro teams were the finalists.

The final was outstanding and truly exciting: the match even went to a third-set tie-break before the winners could be announced. Vini Fontana, Guilherme Prata, Joana Cortez and Samantha Barijan defeated Paula Cortez, Flavia Munis, Danien Fink, adao Chagas and Felipe Toledo in great style before their crazy fans. It was Brazil all the way.

The Marriott Stellaris International Beach Tennis Event, with its 400 participants drew lots of enthusiastic supporters to MooMba during the past weekend. Especially when Aruba's players shone

on the sandy courts the atmosphere was electric and a lot of fun. No rainshowers could dampen the sheer energy that this international event generates: everyone is happy and in great spirits, win or lose.

The awards presentation of the Marriott Stellaris Beach Tennis Event will be held on Monday, November 22 at the Marriott Stellaris Casino; then the US \$ 10,000 prize money will be divided among the winners.

For updates and information one can surf to www.arubabeachtennis.com.



Sponsors of the event are Marriott Stellaris Casino, MooMba Beach, Amstel Bright, Alno Kitchen, Deloitte, Aruba Aloe, Professional Pest Control, Company 81, The Entertainment Group, Now, Island Temptation, Holiday Inn, ISA, ATA, AMC Unicon, Zen Design,

AWA, Bacardi Mojito and Powerade. Madame Janette was the sponsor of the Junior Tournament. The Marriott Stellaris International Beach Tennis Event has been rated GI Grade, the highest recognition of the World Cup tour, together with New York and Rome. □



Great winners of the Madame Janette Youth Beach Tennis Tournament



Continued from Page A7

The winners were:

Pro kids:

1 Tom Croes/Mathys van Reek

2 Milan de Jonge/ Tim Hekman

Fun kids:

1 Mick Henriquez/ Randy vd Heuvel

2 Ole de Bruyn/Vincent de Bruyn, Marieke Buuts, herself one of Aruba's most talented and successful pro's in the Ladies Division, was the tournament director of the Madame Janette Youth Beach Tennis Tournament. □

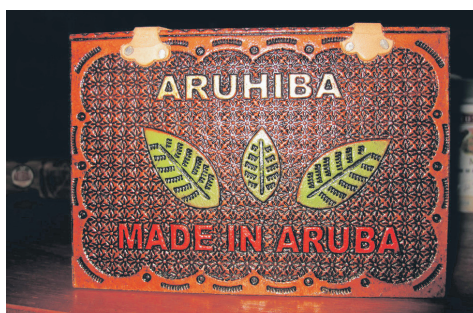
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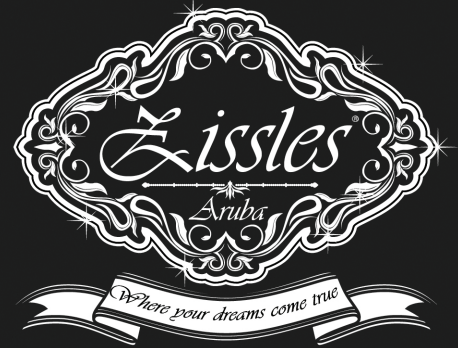


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Marriott Stellaris Beach Tennis Event sees amazing matches in all categories



HADICURARI - Aruba's enthusiastic beach tennis players have done really well in the Marriott Stellaris Beach Tennis Event, which was held this past weekend. The level was high in all the categories, mainly because of the influx of the international participants. Great players from Brazil, the Czech Republic, Holland, Belgium and Italy pitched their strength against each other and against the Aruban players in a friendly way. MooMba Beach was one huge, happy party the entire weekend long. On Sunday afternoon and evening the knock-out draws

in the Fun, Intermediate, Advanced, Masters and Pro divisions took place. We do not have the results of the finals yet, but these will be known tomorrow. What we do know is how well local players Jochem Ros with his Brazilian partner Adao Chagas played against Italians Melliconi and Tronki. They lost in the Pro division with a very, very good 6-7 in the tie-break. Youngsters Aksel Samarczic and Serghio Jie-Sam-Foek played an amazing match against Gui Prata and Vinicius Fontana from Brazil. Although the Arubans were ahead, they could not convert five match

points into victory. They lost against the more experienced team 6-7. Marieke Buuts and Margo van Doorn did very well in the Pro Ladies – they were still playing and winning, but had some tough matches to go through as yet. In the Advanced Ladies there were some good results for the Aruban team of Trudy Klaassen and Noortje Derksen, Paulien ter Meulen and Jacoby Olree as well as for Lisa Blok and Jennifer – these team proceeded to the knock-out round of the tournament.

The finals of the Marriott Stellaris Beach Tennis Event were held last Sunday evening. We shall keep you posted! □



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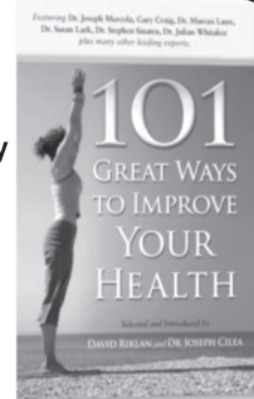
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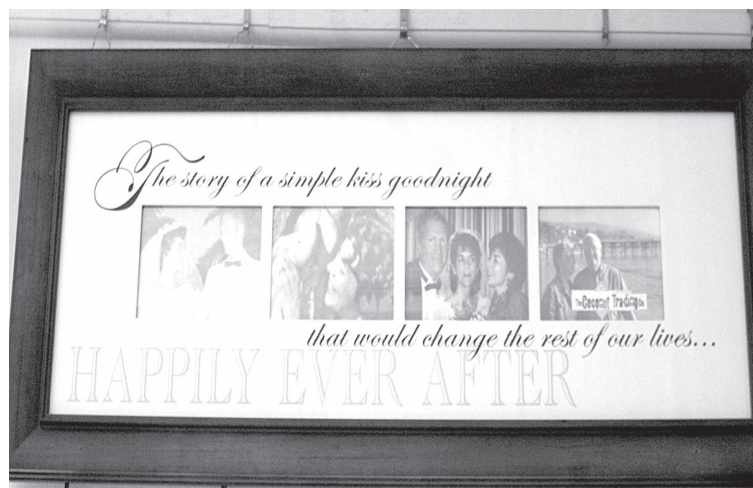
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Iran sets February trial date for three Americans

NASSER KARIMI

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran has set a Feb. 6 trial date for three Americans arrested more than a year ago along the Iraqi border and charged with spying, their lawyer said Sunday. The trial was to have started on Nov. 6, but authorities said they delayed it because one of the Americans, who was freed on bail, had not been summoned to return to the country to appear in court.

The case is among the many points of confrontation between Iran and the United States, which has repeatedly appealed for the Americans to be released. Their lawyer, Masoud Shafiei, said he received an official notification Sunday of the new trial date.

Sarah Shourd was freed in September and returned to the United States. Her fiancé, Shane Bauer, and their friend Josh Fattal remain in prison.

Shourd and their families have denied they did anything wrong. After her release, Shourd said they were hiking in a scenic and relatively peaceful part of northern Iraq and inadvertently crossed an unmarked border with Iran when they were arrested in July 2009.

Iranian authorities said they freed Shourd as a humanitarian gesture because of unspecified health concerns, though the woman has since said her health is fine.

Iran warned that it will seize the \$500,000 bail posted by Shourd if she does not return for trial.

The 32-year-old Shourd, from Oakland, California, has not disclosed any plans to return to Iran.

She said in an interview published Oct. 31 in The New York Times that the three stepped off an

unmarked dirt road and inadvertently crossed from Iraq only because a border guard of unknown nationality gestured for them to approach.

Initially, Iran accused them only of illegally crossing the border. Later, the espionage charges were added, but authorities have given few details to support the accusations.

Tehran's chief prosecutor, Abbas Jafari Dowlatabadi, said in September that the Americans had "equipment and documents and received training." He did not elaborate.

"They did not come to Iraq and Iran for entertainment," Dowlatabadi was quoted as saying then by the official IRNA news agency.

Shafiei said Sunday that the judge in the case has refused to allow him to meet with Bauer and Fattal — both 28 — to prepare for the trial.

"He replied, 'You will meet them on the day of the trial,'" Shafiei told The Associated Press. "I need to meet them to prepare my defense letter."

The three Americans are graduates of the University of California at Berkeley. Shourd and Bauer had been living together in Damascus, Syria, where Bauer was working as a freelance journalist and Shourd as an English teacher. Fattal, an environmental activist, went to visit them in July 2009.

Bauer is a native of Onamia, Minnesota, and Fattal grew up in Pennsylvania. □



In this May 20, 2010 file photo, American hikers Shane Bauer, left, Sarah Shourd, center, and Josh Fattal, sit at the Esteghlal Hotel in Tehran, Iran. Iran has set a Feb. 6, 2011 trial date for three Americans arrested more than a year ago along the Iraqi border and charged with spying, their lawyer said Sunday, Nov. 21, 2010.

Associated Press



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In this Nov. 13, 2010, photo, American nuclear scientist Siegfried Hecker, left, speaks to media upon returning from North Korea, at Beijing international airport in Beijing, China. North Korea has secretly and quickly built a new facility to enrich uranium, according to the American scientist, raising fears that the North is ramping up its nuclear program despite international pressure.

Associated Press

N. KOREA

Continued from Front Page

The scientist, Siegfried Hecker, said in a report posted Saturday that he was taken during a recent trip to the North's main Yongbyon atomic complex to a small

industrial-scale uranium enrichment facility. It had 2,000 recently completed centrifuges, he said, and the North told him it was producing low-enriched uranium meant for a new reactor.

Hecker, a former director of the U.S. Los Alamos Nuclear Laboratory who is regularly given rare glimpses of the North's secretive nuclear program, said the program had been built in secret and with remarkable speed.

Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, said uranium enrichment activities would violate U.N. resolutions and agreements by North Korea over its nuclear program.

"From my perspective, it's North Korea continuing on a path which is destabilizing for the region. It confirms or validates the concern we've

had for years about their enriching uranium," Mullen, the top U.S. military officer, said on CNN's "State of the Union."

The Obama administration has shunned direct negotiations with North Korea following its nuclear and missile tests last year and in the wake of an international finding that a North Korean torpedo sank a South Korean warship in March, killing 46 sailors.

North Korea told Hecker it began construction on the centrifuges in April 2009 and finished only a few days before the scientist's Nov. 12 visit.

Hecker said his first glimpse of the North's new centrifuges was "stunning."

"Instead of seeing a few small cascades of centrifuges, which I believed to exist in North Korea, we saw a modern, clean centrifuge plant of more than a thousand centrifuges, all neatly aligned and plumbed below us," wrote Hecker, a Stanford University professor. Hecker described the control room as "astonishingly modern," writing that, unlike other North Korean facilities, it "would fit into any modern American processing facility." The facilities appeared to be primarily for civilian nuclear power, not for North Korea's nuclear arsenal, Hecker said. He saw no evidence of continued plutonium production at Yongbyon. But, he said, the uranium enrichment facilities "could be readily converted to produce highly enriched uranium bomb fuel."

Uranium enrichment would give the North a second way to make atomic bombs, in addition to its known plutonium-based program. At low levels, uranium can be used in power reactors, but at higher levels it can be used in nuclear weapons. Hecker's findings were first reported in The New York Times.

U.S. nuclear envoy Stephen Bosworth's trip to Asia for talks on North Korea comes as new satellite images show construction under way at Yongbyon.

That, combined with reports from Hecker and another American expert who recently traveled to the atomic complex, appear to show that

the North is keeping its pledge to build a nuclear power reactor.

North Korea vowed in March to build a light-water reactor using its own nuclear fuel. Hecker, and Jack Pritchard, a former U.S. envoy for negotiations with North Korea, have said that construction has begun.

Yang Moo-jin, a professor at the Seoul-based University of North Korean Studies, said the North's uranium disclosure is meant to force the United States back into nuclear negotiations.

The disclosure, Yang said, also is aimed at a domestic audience during the succession process.

"The North wants to muster loyalty among military generals by showing them the North will continue to bolster its nuclear deterrent and uphold its military-first policy," Yang said.

Light-water reactors are ostensibly for civilian energy purposes, but such a power plant would give the North a reason to enrich uranium. While light-water reactors are considered less prone to misuse than heavy-water reactors, once the process of uranium enrichment is mastered, it is relatively easy to enrich further to weapons-grade levels.

North Korea said last year it was in the final stage of enriching uranium, sparking worries that the country may add uranium-based weapons to its stockpile of bombs made from plutonium. Experts say the North has yielded enough weaponized plutonium for at least a half dozen atomic bombs.

Uranium can be enriched in relatively inconspicuous factories that are better able to evade spy satellite detection, according to U.S. and South Korean experts. Uranium-based bombs may also work without requiring test explosions like the two carried out by North Korea in 2006 and 2009 for plutonium-based weapons.

Hecker said the North Koreans emphasized that the centrifuge facility was operating; although he couldn't verify that statement, he said "it was not inconsistent with what we saw." □

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Abbas insists on Jerusalem in settlement freeze

BEN HUBBARD

Associated Press

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP) — The Obama administration's troubled attempt to revive Mideast peace talks took another blow Sunday when the Palestinian president rejected the latest U.S. plan to get the sides talking again.

Mahmoud Abbas said a proposed 90-day freeze on Israeli settlement construction wouldn't get him back to the negotiating table unless it includes east Jerusalem, a condition Israel staunchly opposes.

Palestinians claim east Jerusalem for their future capital. For decades, Israel has built Jewish sections around the city's periphery, and about 200,000 Jews live there now. Palestinians consider the large neighborhoods as illegal settlements.

The impasse highlights the gaps the U.S. must bridge — not to just to achieve a peace deal, but even to get the sides to sit down and talk about one. In Cairo Sunday, Abbas said any construction freeze must include east Jerusalem "first and foremost," along with the West Bank.

"If the moratorium does not apply to all Palestinian territories, including east Jerusalem, we will not accept it," Abbas said after consultations with President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt.

The issue of Israeli settlements

has bedeviled the latest round of peace talks since their launch in September. They broke down three weeks later when a previous 10-month slowdown on West Bank construction expired.

Since then, the U.S. has been pushing Israel to impose a new, 90-day moratorium to draw the Palestinians back to talks.

The U.S. hopes the sides can reach a deal on future borders during that time, in effect determining which settlements Israel will get to keep in a peace agreement and defusing the issue of where it can build.

To entice Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's pro-settlement coalition government, the U.S. has offered a fleet of next-generation stealth warplanes and promises to veto anti-Israel resolutions at the United Nations.

Speaking to lawmakers from his Likud Party late Sunday, Netanyahu said he was waiting for the U.S. to put the offer in writing so he could bring it before his Cabinet.

Netanyahu also said the proposed 90-day moratorium was not specifically meant to deal with borders.

"There is no such request and there is no such commitment," he said. Instead, the sides would discuss "all topics of substance as a whole."

Cabinet minister Eli Yishai of the ultra-Orthodox Jewish



Palestinian authority President Mahmoud Abbas talks during a presser following his meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, not pictured, at the Presidential palace in Cairo, Egypt, Sunday, Nov. 21, 2010. Talks come within the framework of efforts aimed at reviving the Middle East peace process. Palestinian authority President Mahmoud Abbas talks during a presser following his meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, not pictured, at the Presidential palace in Cairo, Egypt, Sunday, Nov. 21, 2010. Talks come within the framework of efforts aimed at reviving the Middle East peace process.

Associated Press

Shas Party, said Shas seeking clarifications from the U.S. that the measure will not apply to east Jerusalem and that the U.S. will not ask Israel to freeze settlement construction again once the 90 days are up. The U.S. has been seeking a compromise. American officials said they were not pushing to include east Jerusalem in the new freeze but were also resisting Israel demands to declare the area exempt. They spoke

on condition of anonymity because negotiations are ongoing.

East Jerusalem was not officially included in the previous freeze, but Israel quietly curbed new construction there. The U.S. appears to be seeking a similar compromise now.

Israel captured the West Bank and east Jerusalem from Jordan in the 1967 Mideast war and immediately annexed the eastern sector — a move

the international community has not recognized.

Israel now considers east Jerusalem an integral part of its capital, though the Palestinians hope to establish their capital there.

Previous unsuccessful negotiations have included a formula under which Israel would keep the Jewish sections and the Palestinians would receive the Arab areas. Netanyahu has not repeated that formula. □

Dictator General Francisco Franco anniversary prompts rallies in Spain

HAROLD HECKLE

Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — Hundreds of people nostalgic for Spain's fascist past held a rally on Sunday to mark the 35th anniversary of dictator Francisco Franco's death.

The peaceful demonstration was held in Madrid's central Plaza de Oriente square near the opera and Royal Palace in the city's old quarter.

On Saturday, three smaller protests were held, including pro- and anti-Franco gatherings northwest

of Madrid at Franco's mausoleum.

Jose Maria Pedreno, head of an association that wants abuses during and after Spain's civil war investigated, said at one rally that the nation should tear down part of the divisive reminder of the Franco era and make it a monument to the folly of war.

The Valley of the Fallen mausoleum is carved into a mountainside some 30 miles northwest of Madrid and features 500-foot tall granite cross.

It is a popular tourist destination, although for many Spaniards it is painful and divisive reminder of a bloody war and its aftermath.

Pedreno said the cross should be demolished and Franco's body given to his family for reburial elsewhere in a less provocative and more appropriate location.

Franco supporters flock to the monument each year to commemorate the dictator, who died in 1975 after nearly four decades at the helm of the country.



Blas Pinar, center, the historical leader of a dwindling far-right party salute outside the Opera House with a catholic priest during a homage to former Spanish Dictator Gen. Francisco Franco on the 35th anniversary of his death, in Madrid, Sunday, Nov. 21, 2010.

Associated Press

His body was interred in the mausoleum, which he built over 20 years from 1940 as a

symbol of his victory. It was inaugurated with a basilica run by Benedictine monks. □

Aged Saudi ruler to fly to U.S. over blood clot



In this photo released by Saudi Press Agency, King Abdullah, center, of Saudi Arabia arrives to his palace in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Friday, Nov. 19, 2010. The Saudi Press Agency (SPA) said that King Abdullah entered a hospital on Friday due to complications in the back pain suffered by them and the doctors advised him to rest.

Associated Press

ABDULLAH AL-SHIHRI

Associated Press

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP) — Saudi Arabia's aged ruler will fly to the

United States for medical tests over a blood clot, according to a Saudi official, in a development that would renew questions about succession in

the oil-rich kingdom.

The 86-year-old King Abdullah is set to leave on Monday, three days after he was admitted to the hospital suffering from back pain due to a blood clot, the official said late Saturday. The official didn't say which hospital would receive the king.

On Friday, the palace said that the king had a blood clot, which had created pressure on the nerves surrounding a ruptured disc.

Crown Prince Sultan, 85, will arrive in Riyadh on Sunday to oversee the kingdom, the official added.

Prince Sultan, the defense minister, has spent over a year in the U.S. and Morocco for medical treatment of his own. He underwent surgery in New York in February last year before going to his palace in Agadir, Morocco, to recuperate.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the press.

Earlier this week, King Abdullah stepped down as head of the country's National Guard and transferred the influential position to his son.

He also handed over his traditional supervisory duties for the annual

haji pilgrimage to his deputy prime minister Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz, the king's half brother and powerful interior minister.

Abdullah assumed the throne in August 2005 after the death of his long-ailing half brother, King Fahd. He had already been a de-facto ruler for half a decade and the transition to the leadership of the key U.S. ally and oil giant passed smoothly.

The unstable health condition of the king and his crown prince raises questions about the complicated issue of royal succession in the oil-rich kingdom.

In 2006, Abdullah set up the Allegiance Council, a body that is composed of the sons and grandsons of Saudi Arabia's founder, King Abdulaziz, to vote by a secret ballot to choose future kings and crown princes.

The council's mandate will not start until after the reigns of Abdullah and Sultan are over. It is not clear, however, what would happen if Sultan were to die before the end of Abdullah's reign, leaving a question as to whether the council would vote for a new crown prince or whether Nayef would automatically fill that position. □



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Rudisha, Vlasic, win Athlete of the Year awards

SAMUEL PETREQUIN

AP Sports Writer

MONACO (AP) — Kenyan 800-meter runner David Rudisha and Croatian high jumper Blanka Vlasic have won the IAAF World Athlete of the Year award.

The 21-year-old Rudisha became the youngest athlete to ever win the award and succeeded Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt on Sunday after breaking Wilson Kipketer's 13-year-old world record twice within eight days in August.

Bolt missed the latter part of the season because of tightness in his lower back and was not nominated.

Rudisha clocked 1 minute, 41.01 seconds in the two-lap race on Aug. 29 at the Rieti meeting, shaving 0.08 seconds off the mark he set in Berlin the week before.

"I knew when I broke the record there will be a possibility I would be rewarded with this award and it's now a dream come true," Rudisha said.

Kipketer of Denmark set the previous mark of 1:41.11 in 1997 in Cologne, Germany.

Vlasic won the world indoor championships and was also crowned European champion this year. She won 18 out of 20 competitions in 2010 and posted a season best of 2.05 meters. American 400-meter runner Sanya Richards won the women's award last year.

Rudisha and Vlasic, who both won the award for the first time, each defeated four other candidates on the shortlist voted for by nearly 1,800 athletes, officials and journalists. Both will receive \$100,000 checks, despite track and field's governing body pondering this week whether to cancel the bonuses because of its financial problems.

Continued on Page B8

Brady over Manning, Pats beat Colts 31-28



New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady celebrates a touchdown against the Indianapolis Colts during the second quarter of an NFL football game in Foxborough, Mass., Sunday, Nov. 21, 2010.

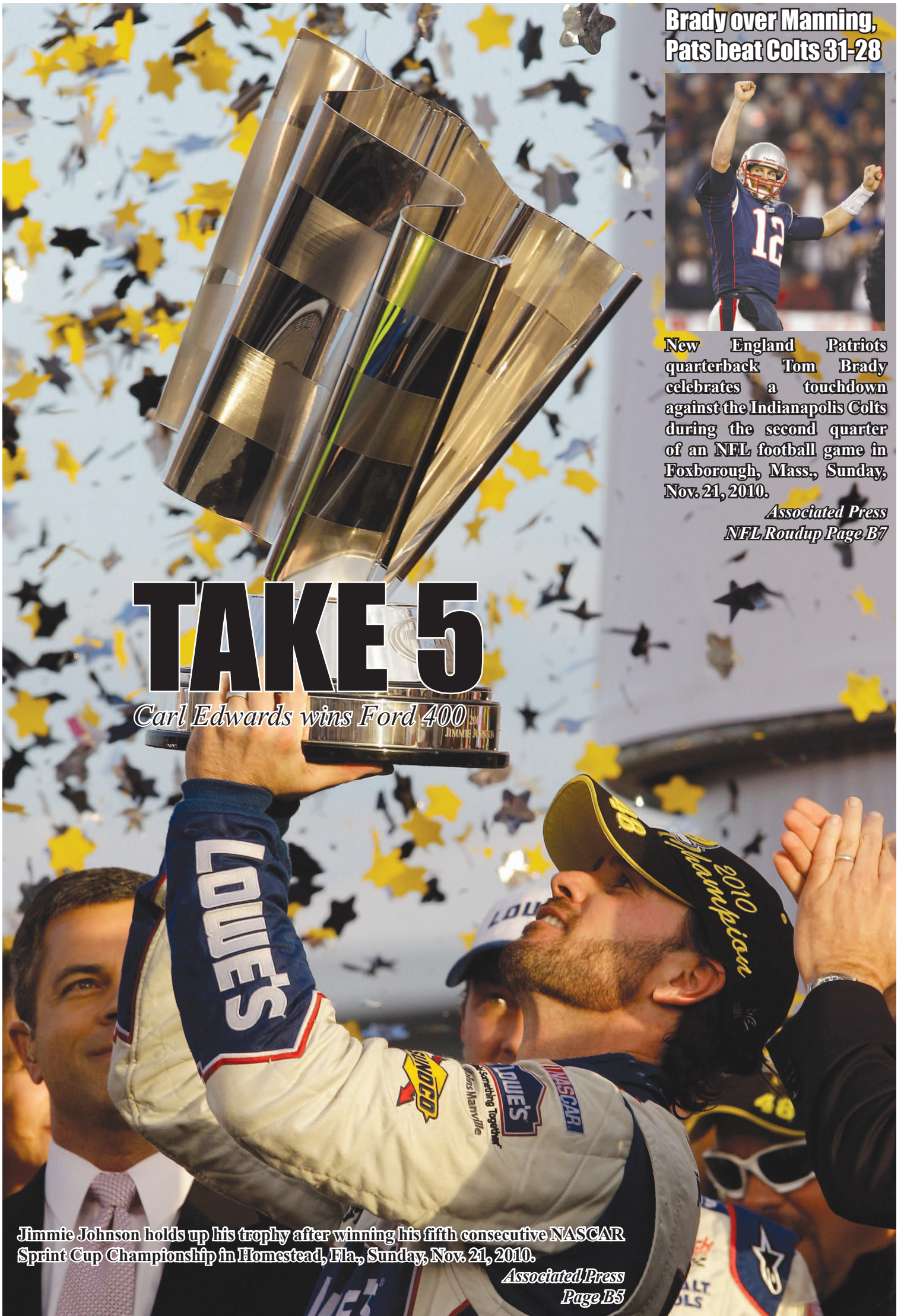
*Associated Press
NFL Roudup Page B7*

TAKE 5

Carl Edwards wins Ford 400

Jimmie Johnson holds up his trophy after winning his fifth consecutive NASCAR Sprint Cup Championship in Homestead, Fla., Sunday, Nov. 21, 2010.

*Associated Press
Page B5*



AP Source: Mets hire Terry Collins as manager



By DAVE SKRETTA

AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK — Terry Collins is a major league manager once again, hired by the New York Mets to help revitalize a franchise that has struggled on the field and at the gate.

A person with knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press of the hire on condition of anonymity Sunday because the two sides were still working out terms of the contract. The person said an announcement is expected early in the week.

Collins was chosen over a group of finalists that included

Wally Backman, Chip Hale and Bob Melvin. He takes over for Jerry Manuel, who was fired along with general manager Omar Minaya in a restructuring of the front office following another dismal season.

The Mets already have hired Sandy Alderson as their new general manager, and former major league GMs Paul DePodesta and J.P. Ricciardi as his assistants. All of them had input in the decision to hire the 61-year-old Collins, who has not managed in the major leagues in 11 years.

Collins interviewed for

the second time with chief operating officer Jeff Wilpon, Alderson and his assistants on Thursday in Orlando, Fla., where major league owners and GMs were meeting.

The other finalists also were brought in for a second round of interviews.

“It’s not just a question of who we are. It’s a question of who we want to be as an organization,” Alderson said earlier this week. “It was interesting for us to find out whether that vision was shared by others.

And in some cases, it might have been confirmed. In some cases, it might have caused us to rethink what we had ourselves imagined.”

Collins is certainly familiar with the Mets roster after serving as their minor league field coordinator this past season. He also has some experience with the front office, after nearly succeeding Jim Tracy as Los Angeles Dodgers manager five years ago when DePodesta was the club’s general manager.

That plan fell apart when DePodesta was fired.

Collins also was considered for the Mets job when Willie Randolph was hired before the 2005 season. He managed the Houston Astros from 1994-96 and the Anaheim Angels from 1997-99, going 444-434 and finishing second in the division five of his six years in charge.

He takes over a Mets franchise that had a \$133 million payroll last season yet finished 79-83, 18 games behind the rival Philadelphia Phillies in the NL East. New York hasn’t been to the playoffs since reaching the 2006 NL championship series. The organization is expected to undergo a complete overhaul the next couple of years, as Alderson and his lieutenants begin to rebuild a weak farm system and find ways to escape from under the weight of burdensome contracts doled out to underperforming players like Oliver Perez (\$36 million) and Luis Castillo (\$25 million).

Injuries left the team in

disarray last season, and at least some of those problems will linger when the Mets convene for spring training in Port St. Lucie, Fla.

Star pitcher Johan Santana is expected to miss the start of the season following shoulder surgery, while Jason Bay, signed to a \$66 million contract last offseason, will be coming back from a season-ending concussion sustained in late July. Outfielder Carlos Beltran, slowed by a bad knee, is owed \$18.5 million in the final season of his seven-year deal.

In the bullpen, closer Francisco Rodriguez is coming off thumb surgery for an injury sustained in an August fight with his girlfriend’s father outside the family lounge at Citi Field.

The Mets evidently believe Collins is the right fit to pull all those seemingly disparate pieces together, and perhaps return interest to a club that watched as attendance plummeted last season in its second year at Citi Field. □

Mallinger wins Pebble Beach Invitational

PEBBLE BEACH, California (AP) — John Mallinger won the Pebble Beach Invitational on Sunday, making birdies on four of the last six holes for a 4-under 68 and a two-stroke

victory over Jason Gore.

Mallinger, who lost his fully exempt PGA Tour status after finishing 133rd on the money list, made a 25-foot birdie putt on No. 18 to finish

at 15-under 273 in the event featuring 76 male and female players. He earned \$60,000 in the \$300,000 tournament sponsored by Callaway Golf. Mallinger, who also led after the second and third rounds, had eight birdies, two bogeys and a double bogey in the final round played in intermittent rain.

“I putted well today and putted well all week,” said Mallinger, who has eight top-three finishes but is winless since joining the PGA Tour in 2006. “I love Pebble Beach. It’s tough to beat Pebble Beach.”

Gore, who will join Mallinger in the PGA Tour’s final qualifying tournament, closed with a bogey-free 65.

“I tried, but I just got outplayed,” said Gore, who also birdied the final round. “But I played well and I’ll take the momentum to Q-School.”



John Mallinger tracks his tee shot on the ninth hole during the final round of the Callaway Pebble Beach Invitational, Sunday, Nov. 21, 2010, in Pebble Beach, Calif. Mallinger won the event by birdieing four of the last six holes for a 4-under 68 and a two-stroke victory over Jason Gore.

Associated Press

Pat Perez (65) and Champions Tour player Russ Cochran (71) tied for third at 11 under. Cochran, who began the final round trailing by one stroke, held a one-stroke lead after birdieing the 11m but bogeyed the 13th and Mallinger soon began his final birdie spree.

Annika Sorenstam, completing her first 72-hole tournament since her LPGA Tour retirement in 2008, shot

a 73 to finish at 3 under.

“It’s funny, you don’t play for two years and then you go inside the ropes and the mindset comes back,” Sorenstam said. “It’s there, which is too cool. But you can’t make the same shots anymore.”

Morgan Pressel shot a 72 to finish at 7 under, the best among the 13 LPGA Tour entrants. □

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NBA Roundup

Johnson lifts Raptors over Celtics, 102-101

TORONTO (AP) — Amir Johnson made two free throws with 2.7 seconds left and Andrea Bargnani scored 29 points as the Toronto Raptors beat Boston 102-101 on Sunday to end an eight-game losing streak against the Celtics. Paul Pierce's shot bounced off the rim at the buzzer, giving Toronto its first victory over the Celtics since January 2008.

Johnson had 17 points and 11 rebounds, Sonny Weems added 16 points, and Reggie Evans had 16 rebounds and a season-high nine points for the Raptors, who're on a three-match winning roll. Nate Robinson led Boston with a season-high 22 points, and Pierce and Ray Allen each had 19. Boston has lost two straight for the first time this season.

Hornets 75, Kings 71

At Sacramento, David West had 17 points and Trevor Ariza added 16 to help New Orleans improve to an 11-1 win-loss record, matching San Antonio for the best record in the NBA.

Marco Belinelli scored 12 points, and Chris Paul had nine points and 14 assists for the Hornets, who shot 32 percent and had a season-low point total. New Orleans has won three straight.

Donte Greene had 15 points and 10 rebounds for Sacramento. The Kings have lost nine of their last 10 games.

The Hornets completed a trade Saturday that sent Peja Stojakovic and Jerryd Bayless to Toronto for point guard Jarrett Jack, center David Andersen and guard Marcus Banks. The three new players are expected to join the Hornets on Monday night in Los Angeles for a game against the Clippers.

Pistons 115, Wizards 110, OT

At Auburn Hills, Richard Hamilton scored 12 of his 27 points in overtime for Detroit.

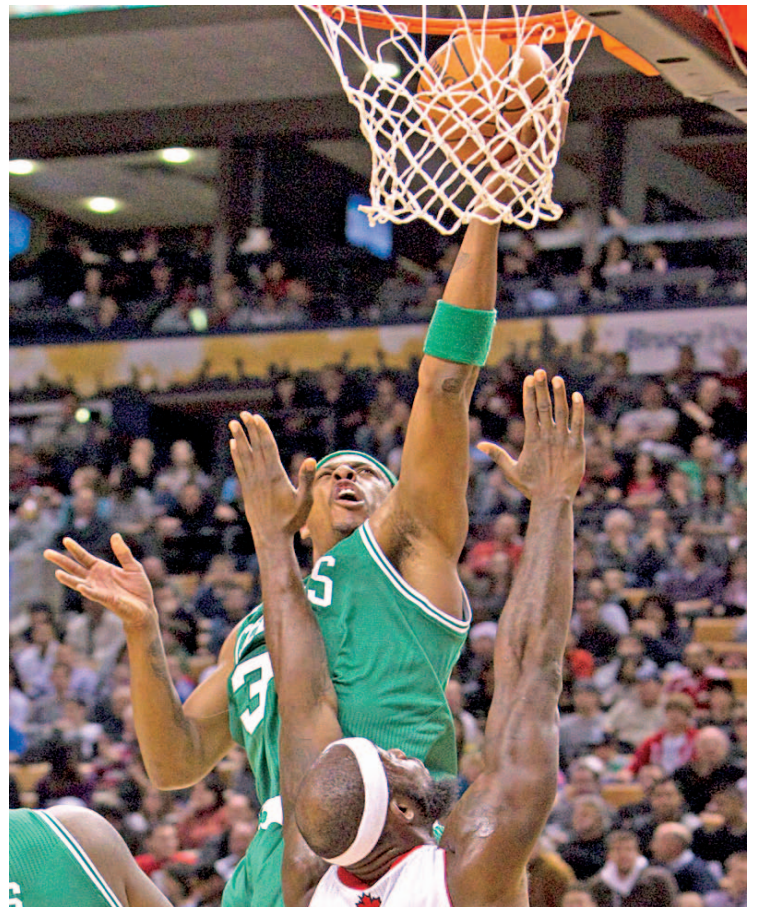
Wizards rookie star John

Boston Celtics' Paul Pierce, top, scores over Toronto Raptors' Reggie Evans during first half NBA basketball action in Toronto Sunday, Nov. 21, 2010.

Associated Press

Wall missed his fourth straight game because of a sprained left foot. He was on the Wizards' active list, and coach Flip Saunders said before the game that he hoped to get a few minutes out of him, but Wall ended up watching in street clothes.

Charlie Villanueva added 25 points for Detroit. JaVale McGee had 20 points and 16 rebounds for the Wizards. Gilbert Arenas added 19 points and a career-high 16 assists. □



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Florida State in, Miami out of AP Top 25 poll



University of Miami quarterback Stephen Morris, left, is pressured by Virginia Tech defensive end Steven Friday, right, in the second quarter during an NCAA college football game in Miami, Saturday, Nov. 20, 2010.

Associated Press

By RALPH D. RUSSO

AP College Football Writer

NEW YORK (AP)—

Florida State moved back into The Associated Press football poll as Miami fell out, and for another week the Sunshine State avoided being without a team in the Top 25 for the first time since 1982.

With three of the top four teams taking the week off, the top of the poll was virtually unchanged Sunday. Oregon is No. 1, followed by Auburn, Boise State and TCU.

Only the Broncos played,

beating Fresno State 51-0 on Friday night at home.

No. 5 Wisconsin flip-flopped with No. 6 LSU. No. 7 was Stanford, followed by Ohio State, Alabama and Oklahoma State at No. 10. No. 22 Florida State (8-3) twice has dropped out of the rankings, but is back in after two straight victories. Miami has yo-yoed in and out of the Top 25 this season and Florida has also dropped out twice.

The Hurricanes (7-4) lost 31-17 at home to Virginia Tech on Saturday to fall out of the rankings for the third

time this season.

Florida (7-4) dropped out last week after losing to South Carolina. Central Florida also spent a week in the rankings.

Since the final 1982 poll, which included no teams from the state of Florida, the Hurricanes, Gators and Seminoles have combined for a total 10 AP national titles.

Over the past four polls, no more than one of those perennial powerhouses has been ranked in the AP poll. North Carolina State also moved back into the rankings at No. 21. The Wolfpack and Seminoles are in a tight race for the ACC's Atlantic Division title.

Southern California, another team that used to be a fixture but has been in and out of the rankings much of this season, dropped out after losing 36-7 at Oregon State. □

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Jimmie Johnson wins 5th NASCAR title in a row

JENNA FRYER

AP Auto Racing Writer

HOMESTEAD, Florida

(AP) — Smooth and steady, five years running, Jimmie Johnson kept his NASCAR reign rolling by stretching his record run of championships to five straight after making the fewest mistakes in Sunday's season finale.

Johnson trailed Denny Hamlin by 15 points entering Homestead-Miami Speedway, but captured another title by running the cleanest race of the three championship contenders. He finished second to race winner Carl Edwards and claimed the championship by 39 points over Hamlin.

Kevin Harvick was third in the race and third in the final standings, 41 points behind Johnson.

"I am just so proud to be in this position, and so thankful to have my great race team," Johnson said.

It was the first come-from-behind championship in the seven years of the Chase for the Sprint Cup championship format, which debuted in 2004 and was won each year by the driver who took the points lead into the finale.

That wasn't Johnson this year. Not even close.

Despite six wins this season, the No. 48 Chevrolet wasn't as commanding as in years past. It left room for the competition to catch up, and even pass Johnson at the time of the year when he traditionally dominates.

It was Hamlin who took control of the Chase, winning two races and outrunning Johnson over the final few weeks. That set up Sunday's showdown, sending Johnson into a finale in which he needed to race hard for the first time since 2005. In the previous four years, he had the title well in hand by the time he got to Homestead.

The element of having to earn No. 5 may have contributed to one of the heartiest celebrations of Johnson's career. Usually so calm and workmanlike behind the wheel, he was exuberant as

he crossed the finish line, pumping his fists in the car while screaming with joy.

"I think this year we showed what this team is made of," he said. "At times this season we didn't have the most speed, but we had the most heart."

Hamlin, with a series-best eight wins this season, was the guy to beat the final month of the Chase. But poor fuel mileage last week in Phoenix kept it tight headed into Sunday, and he had a terrible race when he needed only a clean run.

Contact with Greg Biffle very early in the race sent Hamlin into a spin and damaged the front of his car.

He dropped to 37th by the restart and had to work all day to finish 14th.

"We had a great year, we won the most races that we ever won, we contended like we've never contended before and just circumstances took us out of this one," Hamlin said.

Harvick, meanwhile, took the lead on a round of pit stops with 80 laps to go, but was flagged for speeding as he entered pit road. It dropped him to 29th, and he was still upset with the call after the race.

"I don't think that penalty will ever settle in my stomach," Harvick said, insisting that "only a handful of people" get to see the pit road speeds. "I won't ever settle for that."

But he wasn't devastated by the defeat, pointing to all

the gains made this year by Richard Childress Racing. A year after failing to put any cars into the Chase, RCR had three in the field and Harvick, winner of two races, led the points for most of the regular season.

"It's a 180 for us," Harvick said. "Last year this time we all wanted to put a gun in our mouth."

While Harvick could find the bright spots, Hamlin, sitting next to him at the podium, had a harder time finding much to be happy about. With a vacant look and muffled answers, he vowed to be back stronger next season.

"My job is to work in the offseason to do everything I can to be better and, you know, I know every year that I am in the Cup series, I'm going to be better than I was the previous year," Hamlin said. "We're going to keep working and go get them next year."

As both drivers discussed their day, Johnson's championship celebration was shown on the multiple televisions hanging around the room and both drivers watched portions of the presentation.

Who could blame them? It was history.

The fifth title moved Johnson past Hendrick Motorsports teammate Jeff Gordon for most titles among active drivers. He now ranks third on the career list behind seven-time champions and Hall of Famers Richard Petty



NASCAR driver Jimmie Johnson celebrates after winning his fifth Sprint Cup Series Championship Sunday, Nov. 21, 2010 in Homestead, Fla.

Associated Press

and Dale Earnhardt.

"Finally, finally, after being able to pull this off, he'll get the respect and the rewards that he deserves," crew chief Chad Knaus said.

The championship was a record 10th for Hendrick Motorsports, which broke a tie with Petty Enterprise for most in NASCAR. Johnson and HMS also joined three other pro teams — the Boston Celtics, New York Yankees and Montreal Canadiens — to win five consecutive

titles. The Celtics are the all-time leaders with eight consecutive NBA titles.

"Somebody has got to win it, and I'm glad it was us," team owner Rick Hendrick said, noting that "this race was so up and down. It was like who's going to screw up the most?"

Not Johnson and Knaus, who overcame a few slow pit stops — their one trouble spot this season — to show why they've been so good for so long. □

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Federer, Murray win in straight sets at ATP finals



Britain's Andy Murray react after winning a game from Sweden's Robin Soderling, during a round robin single tennis match of the ATP World Tour Finals at O2 Arena in London, Sunday, Nov. 21, 2010.

Associated Press

CHRIS LEHOURITES

AP Sports Writer

LONDON (AP) — Roger Federer and Andy Murray won their opening matches Sunday at the ATP World Tour Finals, each victorious in straight sets on the opening day of the season-ending event.

The second-ranked Federer beat David Ferrer 6-1, 6-4 on the indoor hard court at the O2 Arena, while Murray defeated Robin Soderling 6-2, 6-4. Federer, a four-time champion at the tournament for the top eight players in the world, stretched his record to 11-0 against the seventh-ranked Spaniard, dominating the first set and spraying shots all around the court.

"I'm really happy the way I was able to get out of the first match here," said Federer, who will face Murray on Tuesday. "Starting off with a feisty top-10 player is never easy."

Ferrer was playing at the ATP finals for the first time since losing to Federer in the 2007 final. And he looked nervous at the start, allowing Federer to break him in all three service games in the first set. The Spaniard's only winning game came on Federer's serve while already trailing 4-0.

"I served very bad through all the match," Ferrer said. "With Roger, it's impossible to take the chance if you (don't) serve good."

Despite the score, Federer didn't dominate. The 16-time Grand Slam champion was forced to deuce five times and had to save five break points in the second set.

"Looking at the score line, it doesn't reflect how tough it was," Federer said. "There were many close games, especially in the second set."

Federer's only break in the second set came at 2-2 when Ferrer sent a forehand wide and then raised his racket over his head before deciding not to smash it into the court.

In the crowd, the cheers were mostly for Federer — unsurprising considering his six Wimbledon titles at the All England Club.

"He's the No. 2 of the world and the best player (in) history," Ferrer said. "Always when one plays Federer, the people support more him than the other players."

Federer and Murray are in Group B at the round-robin tournament and will face each other on Tuesday. Group A will take the court on Monday with top-ranked Rafael Nadal facing Andy Roddick and Novak Djokovic playing Tomas Berdych.

The fifth-ranked Murray, who dropped below No. 4 Soderling in last week's rankings, kept the ball away from the Swede's strong forehand. "I played very smart tennis today," Murray said. "And even when obviously it was getting tough in the second set, a lot of long rallies, I was on the defensive quite a lot, stuck to my tactics well and managed to come through."

Soderling, who again reached the French Open final this year and won the Paris Masters for the first time, had only five forehand winners while committing 12 unforced errors with his often dominating shot.

"He was defending really well," Soderling said. "I was hitting the ball pretty hard sometimes, try to be aggressive. Every time I came to the net, he came up with a really good shot."

Murray looked to be the more solid player throughout, facing only one break point in the match while converting three of his six.

The Briton earned his first break early in the match, hitting a backhand winner off Soderling's serve to make it 2-1. He converted another to make it 5-2 and then served out the first set with a drop shot that hit the line.

"First set was not very good. I wasn't really there," Soderling said. "I think second set was better. But he played better than me today."

In the second set, the pair traded games until 3-3, when Murray broke again soon after taking a 0-40 lead in the seventh game.

"Second set I had to do a lot of running," Murray said. "Didn't always go for the lines. I hit a lot down to his feet, just made him play a lot of uncomfortable shots."

In doubles, top-ranked Bob and Mike Bryan of the United States defeated Jurgen Melzer of Austria and Philipp Petzschner of Germany 6-3, 7-5 and Mariusz Fyrstenberg and Marcin Matkowski of Poland beat Lukas Dlouhy of the Czech Republic and Leander Paes of India 6-3, 7-6 (3). □



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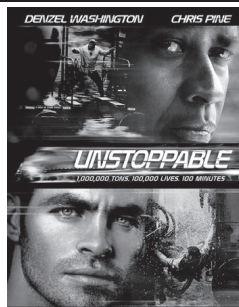
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NFL Roundup

Holmes' TD gives Jets win over Texans 30-27

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey (AP) — Santonio Holmes caught a 6-yard touchdown pass from Mark Sanchez with 10 seconds left Sunday to lift the New York Jets to a stunning 30-27 comeback victory over the Houston Texans.

After New York blew a 16-point lead in the fourth quarter, the Jets trailed 27-23 with less than a minute left. But Sanchez completed two passes to LaDainian Tomlinson and then had a 42-yard pass to Braylon Edwards with 16 seconds remaining.

On the next play, Sanchez found Holmes streaking into the left corner of the end zone for the winning score.

It was another heartbreaking loss for the Texans, who fell last week on a desperation heave as time expired at Jacksonville.

Patriots 31, Colts 28

At Foxborough, Tom Brady barely outdueled Peyton Manning in their annual meeting, leading New England over Indianapolis.

The teams met for the eighth straight season, and Brady guided the Patriots to a 31-14 lead before four-time MVP Manning led a spirited comeback. But Manning was intercepted in the final moments for the third time.

Brady not only beat Manning, the only other quarterback of the last decade in his class, but

equaled another QB icon for an NFL mark. Brady has won 25 straight regular-season home starts, equaling Brett Favre's record when he was with Green Bay.

Steelers 35, Raiders 3

At Pittsburgh, James Harrison caused two turnovers that Ben Roethlisberger turned into touchdown passes in the Steelers rout.

Harrison led a defense that drove Raiders quarterback Jason Campbell from the game, and finished with five tackles, two sacks, an interception and a forced fumble. Roethlisberger finished with three TD passes and also ran for one.

Redskins 19, Titans 16 OT

At Nashville, Graham Gano kicked a 48-yard field goal with 8:17 left in overtime to help Washington end a two-game skid.

The win came on a day when at least seven Redskins went to the sideline with injuries, including Clinton Portis with a re-injured groin.

Donovan McNabb was 30 of 50 for 376 yards with a 5-yard touchdown pass to Santana Moss.

Packers 31, Vikings 3

At Minneapolis, Aaron Rodgers threw for 301 yards, with three of his four touchdown passes to Greg Jennings, as Green Bay beat Brett Favre and Minnesota for the second time this season.



New York Jets wide receiver Santonio Holmes (10) celebrates with teammate Braylon Edwards (17) after catching a touchdown-pass during the fourth quarter of an NFL football game against the Houston Texans at New Meadowlands Stadium, Sunday, Nov. 21, 2010, in East Rutherford, N.J. The Jets won 30-27.

Associated Press

The Packers kept pace in the NFC North race with the Chicago Bears and ruined any realistic hope the Vikings had left to give Favre another shot at a playoff run in his 20th NFL season.

Cowboys 35, Lions 19

At Arlington, Bryan McCann grabbed a batted-down punt and returned it 97 yards for a touchdown, Miles Austin had two short touchdown catches and 38-year-old Jon Kitna had a career-best 29-yard TD for Dallas.

Cowboys interim coach Jason

Garrett won his home debut and improved to 2-0 since taking over for Wade Phillips. It's the first time all season Dallas won at home, having lost the first four.

The Lions lost their 26th straight on the road, extending a woeful NFL record that began in 2007, when Kitna was their quarterback.

Ravens 37, Panthers 13

At Charlotte, Joe Flacco threw for 301 yards and a touchdown and Baltimore's defense returned consecutive interceptions for TDs in the

fourth quarter as the Ravens beat Brian St. Pierre and the Panthers.

The Ravens recovered after a disheartening loss to Atlanta 10 days earlier by finally rattling Carolina's quarterback to break open a surprisingly close game. With Baltimore leading 23-13, Ed Reed picked off St. Pierre, then pitched it to Dawan Landry for a touchdown.

On the next play, St. Pierre was intercepted by Ray Lewis, who rumbled 24 yards for a score. □

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Boxing champ Martinez on incredible rise at age 35



Sergio Martinez poses for cameras after knocking out Paul Williams in the second round of Middleweight Championship Bout in Atlantic City, N.J. on Saturday, Nov. 20, 2010.

Associated Press

DAVE SKRETTA

AP Sports Writer

ATLANTIC CITY, New Jersey (AP) — Sergio Martinez was a good enough athlete in his native Argentina that he played competitive football and tennis, and even became an accomplished cyclist.

He didn't turn to boxing until he was 20, ancient for a sport that rewards youth and wearies quickly of aging stars. He stepped into the ring for the first time 15 years ago for the same reason as thousands before him: to escape from the drugs and violence that ruled the streets of his hometown of Quilmes, in the province of Buenos Aires.

"You cannot dream to be in my place today," Martinez said in the early hours Sunday morning, after the shock of his incredible knockout victory over Paul Williams had worn off.

"I'm very happy, and I'm very happy with myself, with all my life," he said humbly. "This is a very happy day, everybody knows what I'm coming from."

The road to stardom has not been easy for Martinez, nor paved in dollar bills.

His emphatic defense of his middleweight title at Boardwalk Hall is almost certain to be the Knockout of the Year, if not the decade. Yet he earned a little more than \$1 million for the fight, far less than Williams, even though it was Martinez who was defending his title.

The second-class status that Martinez has been burdened with for far too long was also evident in the moments before the fight, when he was moved to the blue corner that had been reserved for the challenger all night. It forced him to pass through the Williams camp occupying the opposite corner and across the ring to reach his own team before introductions.

Martinez promoter Lou DiBella bristled at the slight, but told a few reporters seated ringside that the corner wouldn't matter when Martinez put Williams flat on his back.

DiBella proved prophetic, just not about putting him on his back.

Martinez was quicker to the punch in the opening round and hurt Williams against the ropes midway through it, but it was early in the second that

the drama happened. Williams was setting up for a hook when Martinez literally beat him to the punch, catching him flush on the chin and sending him to the canvas — face first — for a brutally efficient knockout.

"He kept saying it wouldn't go seven rounds," DiBella said. "He told me he'd catch him with one of those punches. He must have said it a 1,000 times. You know me, I worried like a maniac and he was calming me down. He said, 'Don't worry, because I'm knocking him out.'"

Afterward, Martinez's trainer, Gabriel Sarmiento, said he awoke in the middle of the night thinking of a mistake that he had noticed Williams making, in which he seemed to lunge forward on his lead leg after throwing a jab. Sarmiento knew that Martinez would be able to connect when Williams was vulnerable, and even predicted a second-round knockout.

"I knew if Paul made those same mistakes again, Sergio would take advantage of them

and he did," Sarmiento said, displaying a piece of hotel stationary on which he wrote his prediction.

The fight was a rematch of one of last year's epic matchups, when two of the best boxers in the world traded first-round knockdowns before spending the next 11 rounds punishing each other.

Williams won that meeting last December by majority decision, and had argued all along that he would have won more easily had he more time to prepare. Martinez became his opponent just a few weeks before that fight, after a much ballyhooed match with Kelly Pavlik fell through.

Martinez also took the fight on short notice, though, filling in for Pavlik so that he would finally get an opportunity on the sport's grandest stage. This time, he too had more time to prepare — more time to spar against a fellow left-hander, more time to bulk up to middleweight, and more time to uncover Williams' fateful flaw.

"It was very simple. I'm a boxer without excuses," Martinez said. "I said that in the final press conference, I was tired of the excuses from Paul Williams, and I did my job."

And he did it with aplomb, stamping himself as one of the best fighters in the world, behind perhaps only Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Martinez said he wants to fight three or four more times before calling it a career, just a few more big paydays before retirement. The only problem is that his destruction of Williams could make it difficult to find fights against boxing's upper echelon.

After seeing him send Williams into another world, who would want to face him? "He's the greatest fighter I've had the opportunity to promote," DiBella said. "He's going to get the opportunity to fight. How many people are going to run from him? They'll run from him, but he'll get the opportunity to fight." □



Croatian high jumper Blanka Vlasic, right, Kenyan middle distance runner David Rudisha hold their "Athlete of the Year Awards" Sunday, Nov. 21, 2010, in Monaco, awarded by the International Athletic Foundation, during the 2010 World Athletics Gala Awards.

Associated Press

RUDISHA

Continued from Page B1

"I can guarantee they will receive their checks," IAAF president Lamine Diack told The Associated Press. "We need to make cuts but I decided today they will get paid, we won't touch the athletes' bonuses."

Rudisha said he started to think about the world record last year after breaking Sammy Koskei's 25-year-old African record in difficult

weather conditions.

"I told my coach and we decided to try in Berlin because I felt I was ready to try for it," said the former world junior champion. "That is how we planned for it."

Rudisha said he will now try to run the distance in 1:40 but his main goal will be to win a gold medal at world championships next year then at the 2012 Olympics.

Kipketer said it's too early to say whether Rudisha will be

the first man to go under the 1:40 barrier.

"The door is open for someone to run that time and I'm not putting the pressure on him because I think anybody can come along," Kipketer said. "In two years time we will see."

There's young people coming now running 1:42 so is too early to say that."

Rudisha said the crowd support was a key element when he first claimed the record.

"When I was running, the pacemaker would only get me to 450 meters or possibly 500, then the last 300 I was alone," he said. "The only thing you could hear and see was the crowd cheering and you realize you are running fast and you need to push. In Berlin, the crowd was crazy and I said: 'Oh my God. The last 100 I have to push because I feel I'm going to do something.'"

Vlasic, the reigning world indoor and outdoor champion, said she struggled all season both mentally and physically. □

Tigers could be extinct in 12 years if unprotected



James Leape, Director General of World Wildlife Fund (WWF) International looks on at the International Tiger Forum in St. Petersburg, Russia, Sunday, Nov. 21, 2010. The WWF gathering in St. Petersburg is being seen as an unprecedented chance to agree on ways to boost the world wide population of tigers.

(AP Photo/Dmitry Lovetsky)

By IRINA TITOVA,
Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia — Wild tigers could become extinct in 12 years if countries where they still roam fail to take quick action to protect their habitats and step up the fight against poaching, global wildlife experts told a “tiger summit” Sunday.

The World Wildlife Fund and other experts say only

about 3,200 tigers remain in the wild, a dramatic plunge from an estimated 100,000 a century ago.

James Leape, director general of the World Wildlife Fund, told the meeting in St. Petersburg that if the proper protective measures aren’t taken, tigers may disappear by 2022, the next Chinese calendar year of the tiger.

Their habitat is being

destroyed by forest cutting and construction, and they are a valuable trophy for poachers who want their skins and body parts prized in Chinese traditional medicine.

The summit approved a wide-ranging program with the goal of doubling the world’s tiger population in the wild by 2022 backed by governments of the 13 countries that still have tiger populations: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand, Vietnam and Russia. The Global Tiger Recovery Program estimates the countries will need about \$350 million in outside funding in the first five years of the 12-year plan. The summit will be seeking donor commitments to help governments finance conservation measures.

“For most people tigers are one of the wonders of the world,” Leape told The Associated Press. “In the end, the tigers are the inspiration and the flagship for much

broader efforts to conserve forests and grasslands.” The program aims to protect tiger habitats, eradicate poaching, smuggling, and illegal trade of tigers and their parts, and also create incentives for local communities to engage them in helping protect the big cats. The summit, which runs through Wednesday, is hosted by Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, who has used encounters with tigers and other wild animals to bolster his image. It’s driven by the Global Tiger Initiative which was launched two years ago by World Bank President Robert Zoellick. Leape said that along with a stronger action against poaching, it’s necessary to set up specialized reserves for tigers and restore and conserve forests outside them to let tigers expand.

“And you have to find a way to make it work for the local communities so that they would be partners in tigers conservation and benefit from them,” Leape said. “To save

tigers you need to save the forests, grasslands and lots of other species,” he added. “But at the same time you are also conserving the foundations of the societies who live there. Their economy depends very much on the food, water and materials they get from those forests.” About 30 percent of the program’s cost would go toward suppressing the poaching of tigers and of the animals they prey on.

Russia’s Natural Resources Minister Yuri Trutnev said that Russia and China will create a protected area for tigers alongside their border and pool resources to combat poaching. Leape said that for some of the nations involved outside financing would be essential to fulfill the goals. “We need to see significant commitment by the multilateral and bilateral institutions like the Global Environment Facility and the World Bank plus individual governments like the U.S. and Germany,” Leape told the AP. □

Leaking Siberian ice raises a tricky climate issue

By ARTHUR MAX,
Associated Press

CHERSKY, Russia — The Russian scientist shuffles across the frozen lake, scuffing aside ankle-deep snow until he finds a cluster of bubbles trapped under the ice. With a cigarette lighter in one hand and a knife in the other, he lances the ice like a blister. Methane whooshes out and bursts into a thin blue flame.

Gas locked inside Siberia’s frozen soil and under its lakes has been seeping out since the end of the last ice age 10,000 years ago. But in the past few decades, as the Earth has warmed, the icy ground has begun thawing more rapidly, accelerating the release of methane — a greenhouse gas 23 times more powerful than carbon dioxide — at a perilous rate.

Some scientists believe the thawing of permafrost could become the epicenter of climate change. They say 1.5 trillion tons of carbon, locked inside icebound earth since the age of mammoths, is a climate time bomb waiting to explode if released into the atmosphere.

“Here, total carbon storage is like all the rain forests of our planet put together,” says the scientist, Sergey

Zimov — “here” being the endless sweep of snow and ice stretching toward Siberia’s gray horizon, as seen from Zimov’s research facility nearly 350 kilometers (220 miles) above the Arctic Circle.

Climate change moves back to center-stage on Nov. 29 when governments meet in Cancun, Mexico, to try again to thrash out a course of counteractions. But U.N. officials hold out no hope the two weeks of talks will lead to a legally binding accord governing carbon emissions, seen is the key to averting what is feared might be a dramatic change in climate this century.

Most climate scientists, with a few dissenters, say human activities — the stuff of daily life like driving cars, producing electricity or raising cattle — is overloading the atmosphere with carbon dioxide, methane and other gases that trap heat, causing a warming effect.

But global warming is amplified in the polar regions. What feels like a modest temperature rise is enough to induce Greenland glaciers to retreat, Arctic sea ice to thin and contract in summer, and permafrost to thaw faster, both on land and under the seabed.

Yet awareness of methane leaks from permafrost is so new that it was not even mentioned in the seminal 2007 report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which warned of rising sea levels inundating coastal cities, dramatic shifts in rainfall disrupting agriculture and drinking water, the spread of diseases and the extinction of species.

“In my view, methane is a serious sleeper out there that can pull us over the hump,” said Robert Corell, an eminent U.S. climate change researcher and Arctic specialist. Corell, speaking by telephone from a conference in Miami, said he and other U.S. scientists are pushing Washington to deploy satellites to gather more information on methane leaks.

The lack of data over a long period of time casts uncertainty over the extent of the threat. An article last August in the journal *Science* quoted several experts as saying it’s too early to predict whether Arctic methane will be the tipping point.

“Arctic Armageddon Needs More Science, Less Hype,” was its headline. Studies indicate that cold-country dynamics on climate change are complex. □



In this photo, Russian scientist Sergey Zimov walks on a Siberian lake near the town of Chersky, Russia, where methane bubbles are trapped under the ice. Gas locked inside Siberia’s frozen soil and under its lakes has been seeping out since the end of the last ice age 10,000 years ago. But in the last few decades, as the Earth has gradually warmed, the icy ground has begun thawing more rapidly, accelerating the release of methane — a greenhouse gas 23 times more powerful than carbon dioxide — at a perilous rate.

(AP Photo/Arthur Max)

'Harry Potter' leaps to \$125.1M debut weekend



Actors, from left, Daniel Radcliffe, Emma Watson and Rupert Grint attend the premiere of 'Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1' at Alice Tully Hall on Monday, Nov. 15, 2010 in New York.

(AP Photo/Evan Agostini)

By DAVID GERMAIN,
AP Movie Writer

LOS ANGELES — Harry Potter has cast his biggest box-office spell yet with a franchise record \$125.1 million domestically over opening weekend, according to studio estimates Sunday.

"Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1" also added \$205 million in 54 overseas countries, bringing the film's worldwide total to \$330.1 million.

In terms of domestic revenue, "Deathly Hallows: Part 1" came in ahead of the series' best previous debut of \$102.7 million for 2005's "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire." But factoring in today's higher admission prices, the latest movie had roughly the same size audience as the franchise's best previous draws — "Goblet of Fire" and 2001's "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone," which launched the series. "Deathly Hallows" and those two earlier movies each sold around 16 million tickets in their first weekend.

Overseas markets for "Deathly Hallows" were led by a \$28 million opening in Great Britain, \$21.8 million in Germany, \$14.8 million in Australia, \$14 million in Japan and \$12.3 million in Russia.

The movie audience has grown up along with young wizard Harry (Daniel Radcliffe) and his friends Hermione (Emma Watson) and Ron (Rupert Grint). Distributor Warner Bros. reported that 25 percent of the audience for the new movie was between 18 and 34, compared with only 10 percent for "Sorcerer's Stone" nine years ago.

"When we started 'Harry Potter,' basically, the audience was driven to theaters by their parents. Today, those same kids are driving to the midnight shows themselves," said Dan Fellman, head of distribution for Warner Bros. DreamWorks Animation's "Megamind," the No. 1 movie the previous two weekends, fell to second-place with \$16.2 million, raising its three-week total to \$109.5 million.

Russell Crowe's thriller "The Next Three Days," the weekend's only other new wide release, debuted weakly at No. 5 with \$6.8 million. Crowe plays a college instructor who plots a jail break to free his wife (Elizabeth Banks) after she's convicted of murder.

Playing in 4,125 theaters domestically, "Deathly Hallows: Part 1" averaged an enormous \$30,332 a cinema. That compared with a \$2,633 average in 2,564 theaters for

"The Next Three Days."

The huge opening bodes well for next July's "Deathly Hallows: Part 2," the eighth and final movie based on J.K. Rowling's seven "Harry Potter" novels. The franchise so far has taken in more than \$5.5 billion worldwide.

Warner Bros. plans to release "Deathly Hallows: Part 2" in 3-D, which should give it a big box-office boost, since theaters charge a few dollars more to see movies projected in 3-D compared with 2-D.

"This is kind of the warmup to the potentially 3-D supercharged finale, and that could really take these 'Potter' numbers to another level," said Paul Dergarabedian, box-office analyst for Hollywood.com.

The studio had hoped to release "Deathly Hallows: Part 1" in 3-D, but the filmmakers ran out of time to convert the film, which was shot in 2-D, for 3-D projection.

"Deathly Hallows: Part 1" landed at No. 6 on the domestic revenue chart for biggest opening weekends, a list headed by 2008's "The Dark Knight" with \$158.4 million. It also was this year's second-biggest debut, behind "Iron Man 2," which is No. 5 on the all-time chart with \$128.1 million.

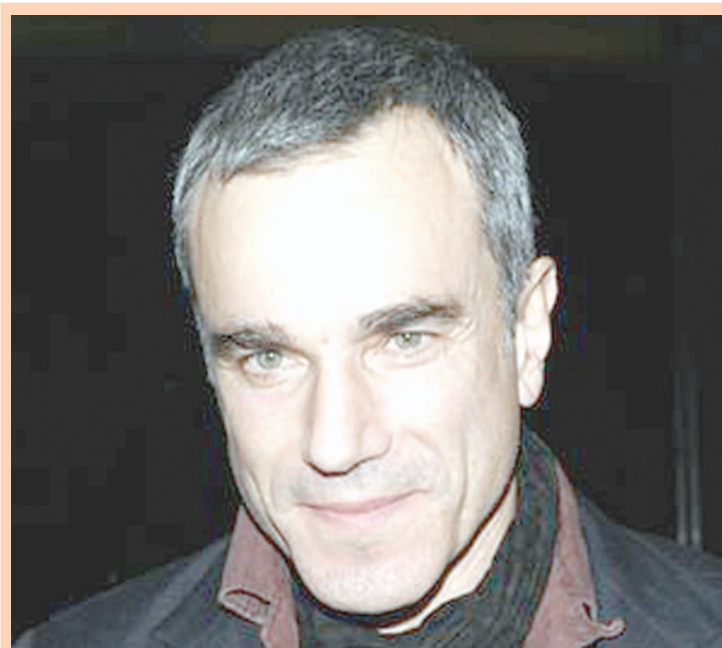
With \$61.2 million Friday, "Deathly Hallows: Part 1" had the fifth-biggest opening day ever.

The film took in \$12.4 million, just over 10 percent of its weekend domestic revenue, in huge-screen IMAX theaters. That broke the previous IMAX record debut of \$12.1 million set in March by "Alice in Wonderland."

"Harry Potter" was not able to lift Hollywood's total weekend receipts above last year's. Overall revenue came in at an estimated \$197 million, down 24 percent from the same weekend a year ago, when the industry had a one-two punch with debuts of \$142.8 million for "The Twilight Saga: New Moon" and \$34.1 million for "The Blind Side," according to Hollywood.com.

Hollywood is poised for big business over Thanksgiving, one of its busiest weekends.

Revenues should remain strong for "Harry Potter," while studios are delivering a broad range of newcomers with Disney's animated musical "Tangled," featuring the voice of Mandy Moore; Sony's song-and-dance tale "Burlesque," starring Christina Aguilera and Cher; 20th Century Fox's romance "Love & Other Drugs," with Jake Gyllenhaal and Anne Hathaway; and CBS Films' action thriller "Faster," featuring Dwayne Johnson. Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Hollywood.com. Final figures will be released Monday. □



FILE - In this Nov. 15, 2009 file photo, actor Daniel Day-Lewis attends a special screening of 'The Private Lives of Pippa Lee' hosted by The Cinema Society in New York. Academy Award-winning actor Daniel Day-Lewis is preparing for his role as Abraham Lincoln by visiting the state where the former president began his political career.

(AP Photo/Evan Agostini, File)

Daniel Day-Lewis in Ill. to prepare for 'Lincoln'

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — Academy Award-winning actor Daniel Day-Lewis is preparing for his role as Abraham Lincoln by visiting the state where the former president began his political career. DreamsWorks Studios says Day-Lewis will star in the Steven Spielberg-directed film "Lincoln." The movie is based on the book "Team of Rivals" by Doris Kearns Goodwin, who joined Day-Lewis on his tour in Illinois.

The State Journal-Register reports the actor toured several historic sites Friday in Springfield, including the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum, the Lincoln Home and the Old State Capitol, where Lincoln served as a legislator.

Filming is expected to begin next fall, and the movie is to be released in late 2012. □



Black Friday to grab investor attention

By Caroline Valetkevitch

NEW YORK — Expectations about “Black Friday,” when Americans traditionally get serious about holiday shopping, could sway stocks this week if it looks like the economy will get a pop from consumer spending.

The outcome of talks to shape a bailout for Ireland could also move stocks, analysts said, but they cautioned that other highly indebted euro zone countries could still be a source of worry.

Ireland will seek a bailout from international lenders, Finance Minister Brian Lenihan said on Sunday, ending weeks of speculation that it would need aid to prop up its banks and help it secure cheaper state funding.

Sources have told Reuters Ireland may need 45 billion to 90 billion euros (\$63 billion to \$126 billion), depending on whether it needs help only for its banks or to cover general government spending too.

Even though light volume

will define trading during the holiday-shortened week of the U.S. Thanksgiving Day on Thursday, investors will watch to see if retail sales appear strong enough to give the market a Santa Claus rally. The lighter-than-average volume expected this week could lead to exaggerated moves in the market after a week of sharp losses and advances.

Further gains would resume an up-trend that began at the end of the summer, with the Standard & Poor’s 500 index up 14 percent since August 31. The market ended last week little changed and suffered losses the week before.

“Bullish sentiment toward holiday sales is the most likely catalyst for the cyclical bull market to resume, so a lot rests on that,” said Chris Burba, a short-term market technician at Standard & Poor’s in New York. If sales seem weak, “this dip could turn into something bigger.” Retailers have been optimistic in their

forecasts for holiday sales, and investors will want to see evidence to support those forecasts as worries about consumer spending weigh on the economic outlook.

At a rate of 9.6 percent, unemployment is seen as one of the biggest drags on the U.S. economy,

Target Corp (TGT.N) last week was the latest retailer to give an upbeat forecast, saying it expects to post its best same-store sales in three years during the period.

The day after Thanksgiving traditionally marks the start of the holiday shopping season and is called Black Friday because retailers generally make enough sales to get their accounts into black ink.

Shoppers are expected to flood stores in search of bargains while retailers fight for their share of those sales. Target, for instance, is using a built-in discount for shoppers who use its store credit card.

“It’s a very competitive retail environment ... a



A woman holds a Macy’s Inc shopping bag outside a store in New York .

sign people are slugging it out” for every last sale, said Sasha Kostadinov, a portfolio manager at Shaker Investments in Cleveland.

With the recent market weakness, the S&P 500 has had trouble staying above 1,200 and ended just below that level on Friday.

A break above the mark, however, “would be a good sign,” signaling bullish momentum, said Ryan Detrick, senior technical

strategist at Schaeffer’s Investment Research.

GDP, DURABLES ON TAP Last week, the Dow Jones industrial average (.DJI) rose 0.1 percent, the S&P edged up 0.04 percent and the Nasdaq dipped 0.004 percent.

Among this week’s economic data is the government’s second estimate of third-quarter gross domestic product growth, expected to show the economy grew a bit faster than previously thought. □

BP claims a gamble: Get check now, risk less later

By BRIAN SKOLOFF,

Associated Press

OCEAN SPRINGS, Miss. — Fishermen and business owners stung by a summer of lost revenue from the Gulf of Mexico oil spill have until Wednesday to file their compensation claims for short-term damages, and then they have to ask themselves: Do I feel lucky?

Many will eventually be offered a final settlement from BP PLC’s compensation fund — but accepting that check is a gamble. To cash it, they’ll have to sign away their right to ever sue the oil giant and let a court decide how much they’re owed. And if the long-term damages end up amounting to more than the settlement, they’ll be out of luck for additional payments to cover those future losses. They also could wait and risk getting an even lower settlement offer later if the shrimp, oyster, crab and fish industries rebound faster than expected, and tourists return in droves. The fund’s czar, attorney Kenneth Feinberg, said he will be offering “generous” settlement checks with the goal of keeping people out of court,

but they don’t have to accept the offer now. The Gulf Coast Claims Facility, set up to dole out the money, will be around until August of 2013. However, Feinberg warns, they could end up with a much smaller check later.

“If they decide a year from now, I’ll take the final payment, they’re going to have to show prospective damage,” Feinberg said in a recent interview. “But my offer may not be available to them a year from now if everything is back to normal.” If victims want more time to think about it, they can opt for interim payments by submitting a new claim for damages every three months over the next three years. That would still leave them with the option to sue BP. But they’ll have to continue to prove their losses, and their final settlement offer may shrink with each passing day. Mississippi seafood processor Keath Ladner said the structure of the program is forcing people “to gamble on our livelihoods.” The compensation fund has so far paid out nearly \$2 billion, and Feinberg said about 80 percent of business claims have been paid in full. □



Ed Cake, left, president of Gulf Environmental Associates in Ocean Springs, Miss., speaks during the International Conference on Shellfish Restoration in Charleston, S.C., on Friday, Nov. 19, 2010 as Earl Melancon, a biology professor at Nicholls State University in Louisiana, listens. The conference session focused on the impacts of the Deepwater Horizon spill on shellfish in the Gulf of Mexico.

(AP Photo/Bruce Smith)



Health group urges restrict flavored cigarettes



A man holds a cigarette and a pack with a picture of a cancer patient printed on it at a street in Montevideo, Uruguay, Monday Nov. 15, 2010. Philip Morris International Inc., the world's second-biggest cigarette company, is pursuing a claim before World Bank arbitrators alleging that Uruguay is violating its trade agreement by requiring that anti-smoking warnings cover 80 percent of cigarette packages.

(AP Photo/Matilde Campodonico)

By RAUL O. GARCES
MICHAEL WARREN,
Associated Press

MONTEVIDEO, Uruguay — In a major blow to the tobacco industry, public health officials from around the world agreed Saturday to recommend restricting or banning flavor additives that make cigarettes more attractive to new smokers. Delegates from 172 countries

that have signed on to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control treaty also agreed to recommend that tobacco producers be required to disclose their ingredients to health authorities.

The tobacco industry lobbied hard against the guidelines, saying that millions of jobs would be lost and economies ruined if countries follow through.

“There was a lot of campaigning against these guidelines. It’s a major achievement because countries really showed unity and showed they are putting public health policies as a priority before the interests of the industry,” convention spokesman Tarik Jasarevic told The Associated Press. “If these guidelines are implemented, this could lead to a certain decrease of new smokers — fewer young people getting hooked.”

Developing detailed guidelines for how governments should regulate aromatic and flavor additives that make otherwise harsh-tasting cigarettes more palatable has been a major goal since the treaty went into effect five years ago. Articles 9 and 10 now provide a road map any country can use to establish its own regulations. The United States, which has signed but not ratified the convention, is among several countries that already regulate these additives. Canada, France and Australia also do it, Jasarevic said. “It can be done in different ways: Either make a list of ingredients that

are banned, or require that tobacco companies obtain a license for any new additive,” he said.

Chocolate, licorice and strawberry flavors are among hundreds of ingredients added to cigarettes.

Antoon Opperhuizen, a Dutch toxicologist and economist who advised the convention’s secretariat on the guidelines, said “everything used in food is also used in tobacco” — so many chemicals that establishing a fixed list would be impossible.

The 172 signatory nations also agreed to:

- support Uruguay in its legal defense against Philip Morris International, the world’s second-largest tobacco company, which says the country has violated a trade agreement by requiring graphic warning labels on 80 percent of cigarette packages. If World Bank arbitrators agree, Uruguay could be forced to pay the company millions of dollars.

- establish a working group to develop guidelines on taxing tobacco in ways that might

reduce consumption and provide continued funding for the tobacco control convention, which currently has an operating deficit of \$600,000.

- recommend that smoking cessation programs be paid for by national health systems and that governments should train experts to help more smokers quit.

Other goals remained out of reach during the convention in Punta del Este, Uruguay, such as guidelines for encouraging tobacco farmers to switch to other crops.

The International Tobacco Growers Association says the treaty threatens the livelihood of 30 million tobacco growers around the globe.

The association estimated that 3.6 million people in just five poor African countries depend on tobacco cultivation. Reducing demand for harsher-tasting burley tobacco could shrink the economy of Malawi alone by 20 percent, the lobbyists said as they delivered a petition signed by 235,000 growers in 26 countries. □

Scientists Spot Genes Tied to Puberty, Body Fat in Girls

Scientists have pinpointed 30 genes that control the timing of puberty in females. They also believe many of these genes also play a role in body weight regulation or fat metabolism. The international team of researchers analyzed 32 genome-wide association studies that included more than 87,000 women from Australia, Europe and the United States. They then performed replication studies in another group of almost 15,000 women.

In addition to the two genes already known to play a role in the timing of puberty, the team identified 30 new genes and suggestive evidence for another

10 genes. The newly identified genes include four that have previously been associated with body mass index (a clinical measure of weight), three that play a role in metabolism, and three that play a role in hormone regulation, according to the report, which is scheduled to be published in an upcoming issue of the journal *Nature Genetics*. “Our study found genes involved in hormone regulation, cell development and other biological pathways associated with mechanisms age at menarche [onset of first menstruation], which shows that the timing of puberty is controlled by a complex range

of biological processes,” senior author Dr. Joanne Murabito, an associate professor of medicine at Boston University School of Medicine, said in a university news release. “Several of the genes for menarche have been associated with body weight and obesity in other studies suggesting some women may have a genetic susceptibility to weight gain and early puberty,” she added. “It is important to understand that these ‘genetic factors’ can be modified by changes in lifestyle. Efforts to reduce or prevent childhood obesity should in turn help reduce the early onset of puberty in girls.” □



**DISCRIMINATION DOES NOT
PROTECT AGAINST HIV... IT HURTS**

Modern Medicine: Unnecessary C-Sections on the Rise

Amber Angelle

Five years ago, Jill Arnold got some unwanted news at her obstetrician's office. At 37 weeks pregnant, Arnold was told her baby was too big for her body to deliver naturally. Flipping open a calendar, the obstetrician asked when Arnold would like to schedule a cesarean section.

Unconvinced she needed the surgery - the doctor "couldn't provide any statistics or data" her baby was too large - Arnold delivered her 10-pound, 3-ounce (4.6 kilogram) baby the old-fashioned way. Since then, the now 36-year old who lives in San Diego, delivered another baby weighing 11 pounds, and now pens a blog called The Unnecesarean.

Women like Arnold, however, are becoming increasingly rare. Between 1996 and 2007, the number of C-sections performed in U.S. hospitals rose by more than 50 percent to an all-time high: Almost one in three pregnant women, regardless of race or ethnicity, now delivers via a cesarean section, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"The most concerning problem is the high rate in first-time mothers," said Dr. Jun Zhang, a medical researcher at the National Institutes of Health and co-author of a new report on cesarean delivery practices. In his study, published in the American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology last month, Zhang looked at medical records of 228,668 women who had delivered babies in 19 hospitals across the country, to determine the factors involved in cesarean deliveries.

The study underscored a shift - one that has been in the making since the mid-twentieth century - in how hospitals approach the birth process. The shift is toward a more streamlined labor and delivery, and profoundly affects mothers-to-be. In the case of rising C-sections, Zhang wrote in the report, this shift is not likely to reverse any time soon.

A need for clearer guidelines
In 2009, 26-year old Ann

Carter (whose name has been changed) of Gonzales, La., had labored for 14 hours. With her cervix dilated to only 6 centimeters (a woman is ready to give birth when the dilation reaches 10 centimeters), her doctor told her it was time for a C-section.

"I was devastated and scared," Carter said, "I knew it was a possibility but I was hoping it wouldn't happen."

During the surgery, the doctor discovered the umbilical cord had wrapped around the baby's neck, which explained why Carter's labor had stalled. The C-section saved the baby boy's life.

"Most times the decision to perform a C-section is based on the physician's judgment," Zhang said, "but there are great variations in decision-making among physicians." Although there are certainly instances, such as Carter's, in which a C-section is necessary and lifesaving, Zhang said, there are "few clear-cut indications" of when to do one. This is especially true of risks that are newcomers to the public health scene, such as moms of older age and rising levels of obesity, he said. Seemingly by default, the result has been more C-sections.

For example, the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) lists "failure to progress" during labor, as an indication that cesarean delivery is needed. A woman's cervix should dilate by a certain amount each hour. When things slow

down, there is an element of judgment involved where a physician determines whether to continue to wait, induce or perform a C-section. According to ACOG, it can take hours to determine whether or not labor is progressing.

In Zhang's study, however, he found that many patients weren't given a sufficiently long time period to allow their labor to progress. In other words, doctors were calling it quits on waiting and opting for a C-section too soon - often before the patient's cervix was dilated to 6 centimeters.

This was especially true in cases of induced labor, during which a woman is given the hormone oxytocin (also called by its brand name, Pitocin) to initiate labor: Almost half of the C-sections in these women occurred before they were 6 centimeters dilated, Zhang found.

Still, it is not clear whether inducing labor raises the risk of C-section, or whether other factors are involved that contribute to why women were induced in the first place, Zhang told MyHealthNewsDaily.

"It's a good question, and one that we're currently working on," Zhang said.

Practicing defensive medicine Another factor contributing to the record-high cesarean rates is a drastic decline in vaginal births after cesarean (VBAC). Zhang found that 70 percent of women in his study who had previously undergone a cesarean delivery

had C-sections with their subsequent pregnancies, without attempting vaginal delivery.

One reason for this is a fear of lawsuits. If a physician doesn't perform a C-section, and something goes wrong with a patient who previously had a C-section, the law often does not protect the physician, said Dr. Daniel Roshan, an obstetrician and gynecologist (ob-gyn) at New York University Langone Medical Center.

According to the Physician Insurers Association of America, which provides protection to more than 60 percent of private practice physicians in the country, the number of malpractice claims involving obstetric and gynecologic surgery are the second highest of all medical specialties. In 2009, the claims totaled over \$133 million.

Fears of legal action also explain why at least 30 percent of all U.S. hospitals have official bans prohibiting VBACs, according to the International Cesarean Awareness Network (ICAN). And the number of hospitals with de facto bans likely brings the total much higher. "Doctors are practicing legal medicine, not real medicine," Roshan said.

The risks associated with a vaginal birth following a C-section have been somewhat exaggerated, however, Zhang said. □

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News Corp. set to unveil iPad newspaper, 'The Daily'



People are seen here shopping at a Apple store in New York. After months of top secret development, Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. appears poised to take the wraps off a digital newspaper for the iPad called "The Daily."

by Chris Lefkow

WASHINGTON — After months of top secret development, Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. appears poised to take the wraps off a digital newspaper for the iPad called "The Daily."

News Corp. has been tight-lipped about the project but the Australian-born media mogul acknowledged its existence for the first time in an interview last week with his Fox Business Network. Asked what "exciting projects" his sprawling media and entertainment company was working on, the 79-year-old Murdoch cited The Daily but offered no further information about the tabloid for Apple's touchscreen tablet computer.

Details about the project have

been dribbling out in the US media for weeks, however, and The New York Times, citing two employees who requested anonymity, said News Corp. intends to launch The Daily before the end of the year.

The Times said Sasha Frere-Jones, music critic at The New Yorker magazine, would become its culture editor. Others reported to be involved include Jesse Angelo, executive editor of Murdoch's New York Post, Richard Johnson, former editor of the Post's gossip page, and Greg Clayman, the former head of Viacom's digital division, who has been tapped to head business operations at The Daily.

Forbes magazine put the total staff on the project at around 150 and said News Corp. has

budgeted 30 million dollars for the first year of the launch. The Daily brings together three of Murdoch's passions -- newspapers, the iPad and finding a way to charge readers for content online in an era of shrinking newspaper circulation and eroding print advertising revenue.

Murdoch began his career with a single newspaper in his native Australia and while he has expanded into television, movies and book publishing, the News Corp. chairman has always been clear that newspapers are his obsession. At the same time, Murdoch has a serious crush on the iPad, calling it a "game-changer" and potential savior of the struggling newspaper industry.

In an interview in April with The Kalb Report, Murdoch called the iPad a "glimpse of the future."

"There's going to be tens of millions of these things sold all over the world," he said. "It may be the saving of

newspapers because you don't have the costs of paper, ink, printing, trucks.

"I'm old, I like the tactile experience of the newspaper," Murdoch admitted, but "if you have less newspapers and more of these that's OK."

"It doesn't destroy the traditional newspaper, it just comes in a different form," he said. Whether Murdoch plans to charge readers a subscription fee for The Daily is not yet known but the News Corp. chief has made making consumers pay for news online his personal crusade.

The Wall Street Journal requires a subscription for full access to WSJ.com and Britain's The Times and The Sunday Times, two other News Corp. newspapers, recently erected pay walls around their websites.

Murdoch has vowed to begin charging for online access to all of his titles and said in August that he believed most US newspapers would eventually end up doing the

same.

"You'll find, I think, most newspapers in this country are going to be putting up a pay wall," he said, dismissing arguments that readers used to getting news on the Internet for free would be reluctant to pay. News Corp. chief digital officer Jon Miller told top technology and media executives at a gathering in Aspen, Colorado, in July that the iPad may allow the news industry to start charging for content online after years of giving it away for free.

"I think we're seeing a fundamental shift in where content is consumed and it's on to these kinds of devices," he said. "These tablets are heavy media consumption devices, much more than the Web by itself and even smartphones." He said the iPad and other tablets being developed offer "very media rich experiences that I think do allow a re-set, perhaps a do-over for the media industry, a chance to get it right." □

Axiom Telecom aims to raise \$382 million in IPO

By ADAM SCHRECK,

AP Business Writer

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Mideast mobile phone retailer Axiom Telecom is seeking to raise as much as \$382 million in the United Arab Emirates' first initial stock offering this year.

The Dubai-based company said Sunday it plans to float up to a 35 percent stake next month, with shares

being offered to institutional investors at a price of 80 cents to \$1.15 apiece. At those rates, Axiom as a whole would be worth \$760 million to \$1.09 billion.

Unlike past stock sales in the Gulf, small-time retail investors won't be able to participate in the initial public offering. Chief Executive Faisal al-Bannai said that and an "extremely attractive"

offering price should help the company generate sufficient interest among banks and big institutional buyers such as investment funds.

Those IPO investors stand to gain if the share price jumps once retail investors have a chance to buy as the stock begins trading.

"We want to make sure we leave something on the table for the investors," al-Bannai said. "More importantly, we want to make sure we have a very successful aftermarket trading once the share is public."

Axiom sells cell phones in the UAE, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Arab countries. It also has stakes in mobile handset companies in India and South Africa.

It is controlled by family firm al-Bannai Investment, which currently holds a 53 percent stake. Dubai Holding, a conglomerate owned by Dubai's ruler that is struggling to restructure billions of dollars worth of debt, owns 40 percent. Private firm al-Zarouni Enterprises owns the rest. □

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Un jefe de FARC habría sido muerto por militares: presidente colombiano

BOGOTÁ (AFP) - El presidente colombiano, Juan Manuel Santos, dijo el sábado que José Benito Cabrera, alias 'Fabián Ramírez', miembro del mando central ('Secretariado') de la guerrilla marxista FARC, "aparentemente" habría sido abatido en un operativo militar en el sur del país. "Me acaba de informar el ministro de Defensa (Rodrigo Rivera) sobre los resultados del operativo. Acaban de llegar al sitio y han encontrado cuatro o cinco cadáveres, aparentemente uno de ellos es Fabián Ramírez", dijo Santos durante un evento público en el puerto caribeño de Barranquilla. "Aparentemente cayó este bandido. Digo aparentemente porque no está confirmado.

Lo están buscando, pero encontraron sus dos pistolas, su morral, su manecilla y sus computadores. Todo eso indica que lo más seguro es que cayó", explicó. Según el presidente, la incursión a un campamento rebelde del Bloque Sur de FARC, en busca de Ramírez, considerado "un objetivo de alto valor", ocurrió en la madrugada de este sábado en una zona boscosa entre los municipios de la Julia, en el departamento de Meta, y San Vicente de Caguán, en Caquetá. Momentos después, el ministro Rivera señaló a periodistas: "Le hemos dado un golpe certero al campamento base donde establecía su actividad criminal alias Fabián Ramírez (...) y podemos confirmar que

hay seis bajas", enfatizó. 'Ramírez', uno de los siete miembros de la cúpula de la guerrilla Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), tuvo protagonismo como miembro de la Mesa de Negociación durante las frustradas negociaciones de paz entre los rebeldes y el gobierno del conservador Andrés Pastrana (1998-2002). El jefe rebelde, de 47 años, comandó el Bloque Sur de esa guerrilla, a la cual las autoridades colombianas atribuyen la producción, distribución y exportación de cocaína desde las selvas del sur del país. Se le acusa del asesinato de más de medio centenar de militares. Autoridades estadounidenses señalan a Ramírez como



Foto archivo del supuesto líder abatido el sábado por las Fuerzas de Seguridad de Colombia.

responsable del envío de cientos de toneladas de cocaína hacia su país. También lo acusan de crear una sofisticada red de testaferros para lavar dinero producto del tráfico de la

droga. Tres hermanos del jefe rebelde han sido capturados por delitos relacionados con narcotráfico y uno de ellos, Erminso Cabrera, fue extraditado a Estados Unidos en 2007. □

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